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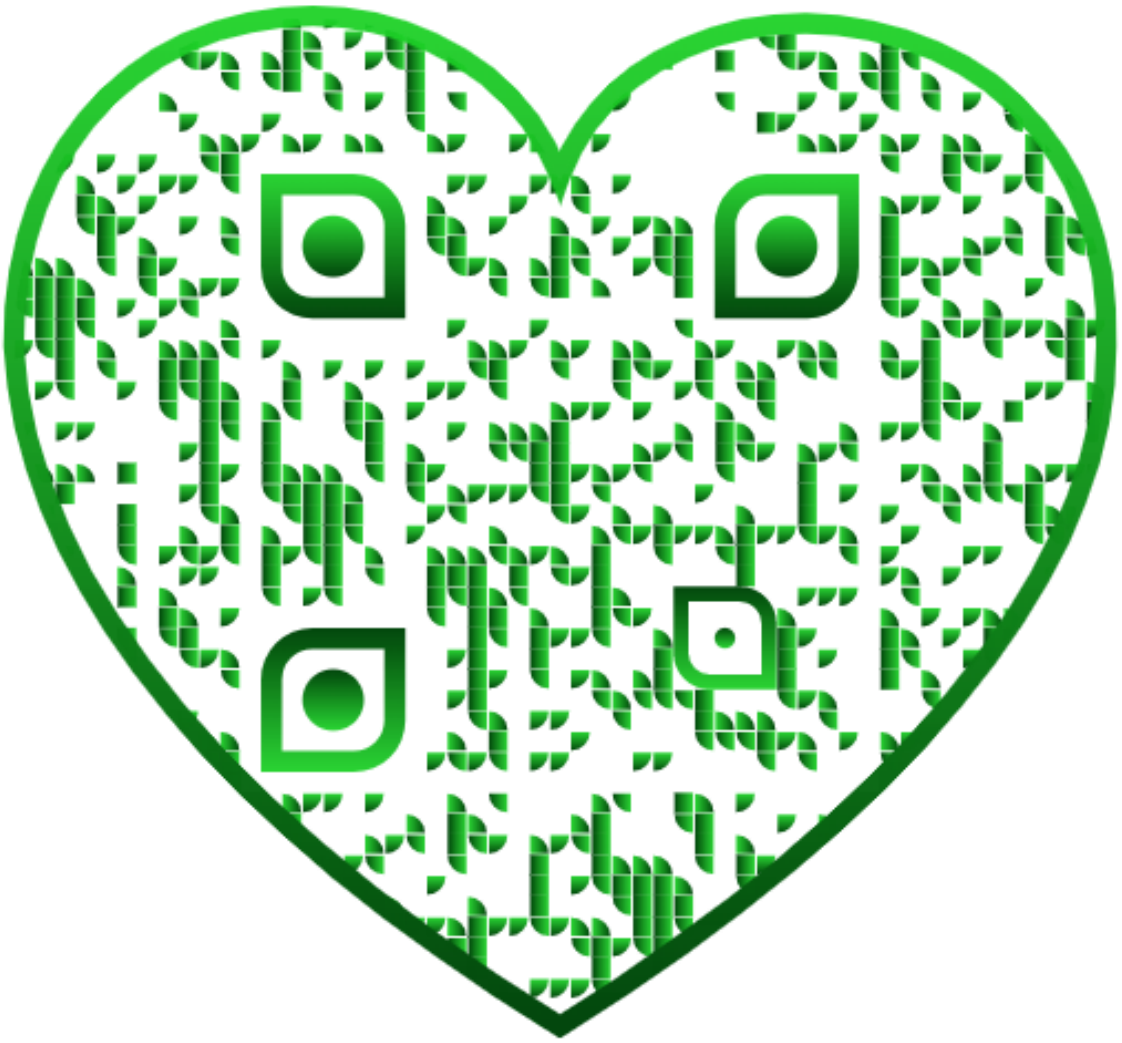

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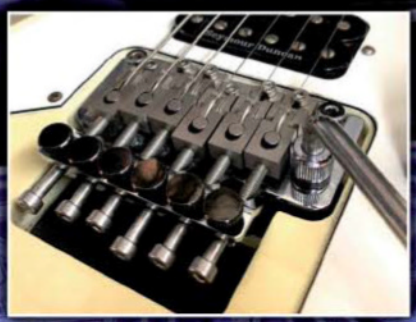
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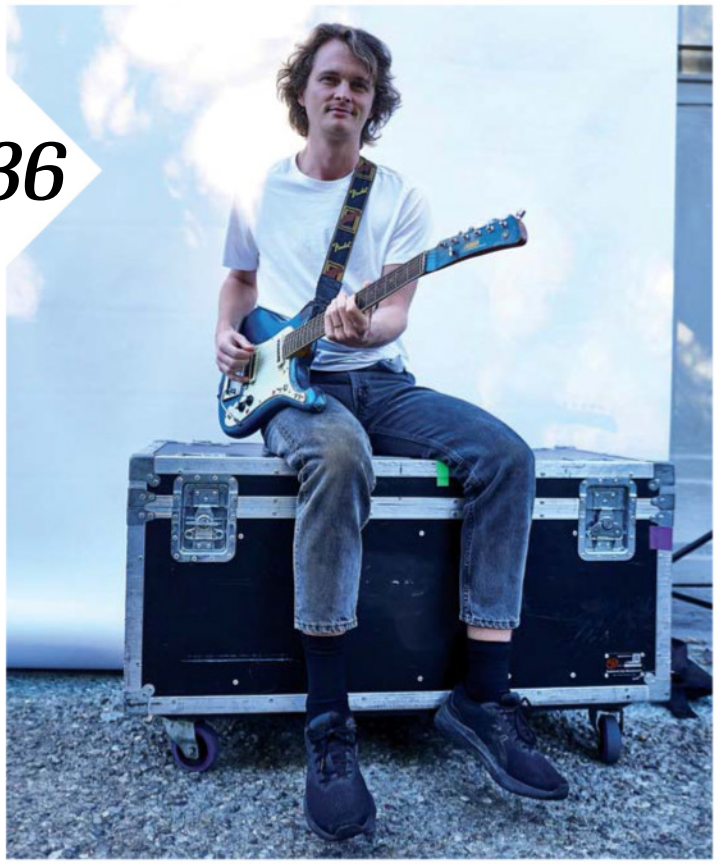

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ODE TO THE OTHER GUYS

YOU MIGHT BE staring at the cover, bellowing, "Jimmy Page — again?" Which is funny, because I actually think of this issue as being dedicated to "the other guys," which is partially the result of my recent "Enough already with this [*frequently covered guitarist/band*]!" attitude. First of all, you've got your King Gizzard & the Lizard Wizard, an Australian band that's been raising eyebrows (and bank accounts) with their eclectic mix of everything-including-the-kitchen-sink rock. You've got Mercyful Fate, who recently spawned "The Jackal of Salzburg," their first new tune since 1999; then there's Dave Davies of the Kinks, Jim Babjak of the Smithereens and a Philly band called Doll Spirit Vessel, not to mention Blake Ibanez and Fugitive. You'll also see this approach played out in the photo selection for our cover feature, which tracks the most important moments in the history of the electric guitar. We figure you know what the Beatles, Metallica and Eddie Van Halen look like by now; we thought it would be nice to give Jackie Brenston, Muddy Waters, Albert King, and — that's right — good ol' Thomas Edison a chance at the spotlight.

By the way, if we were to make a Spotify playlist for this issue (and I've thought about doing this), the star would be King Gizzard's "The Dripping Tap," which clocks in at 18:17. If you get a chance, check it out and tell us what you think of it.

— Damian Fanelli

The Pick
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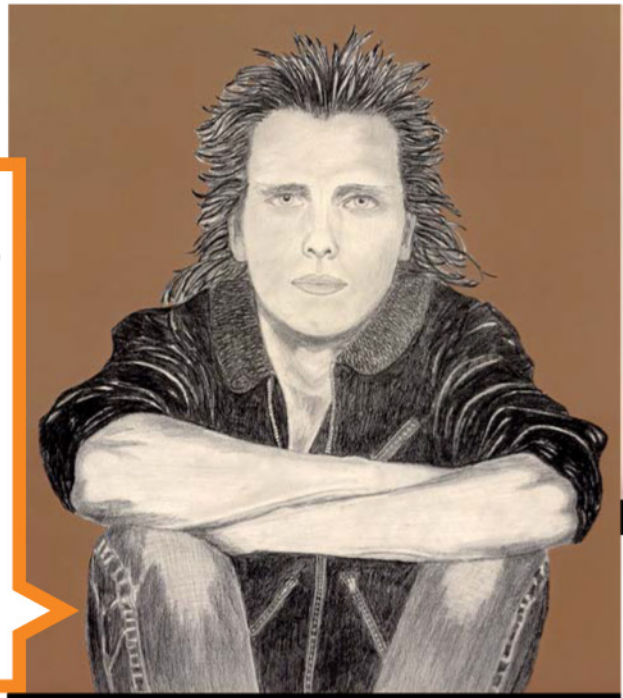
READER ART

OF THE MONTH

If you've created a drawing, painting or sketch of your favorite guitarist and would like to see it in an upcoming issue of *Guitar World*, email **GWSoundingBoard@futurenet.com** with a photo of the image!



MICHAEL SCHENKER BY TIMOTHY C. PITTS

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DEFENDERS *of the Faith*

Rich Thomas

AGE: 53
HOMETOWN: Motown, WV
GUITARS: EVH Circles, Peavey Wolfgang Deluxe, Epiphone JB Les Paul, Fender Telecaster, Epiphone SG Pro, Fender Stratocaster
SONGS I'VE BEEN PLAYING: Alice in Chains "Man in the Box," Pantera "Walk," AC/DC "Back in Black," Van Halen "Eruption"
GEAR I WANT MOST: EVH 5150 III EL34 half-stack, Schector Synyster Gates with Sustainiac

Peter Selgrad

AGE: 16
HOMETOWN: Middle Island, NY
GUITARS: Eric Johnson Strat, Gibson SG, Jimmy Page Tele, Taylor 314ce, Danelectro DC59, Jimi Hendrix Strat, Fender Rarities Koa Strat
SONGS I'VE BEEN PLAYING: Jimi Hendrix "Castles Made of Sand," Led Zeppelin "The Song Remains the Same," Metallica "Fade to Black," Peter Frampton "Lines on My Face," Stevie Ray Vaughan "Voodoo Child (Slight Return)"
GEAR I WANT MOST: Gibson EDS-1275, Stevie Ray Vaughan Strat, Fender Electric XII, Ditto Looper, Marshall Plexi 1959HW half-stack

Paul "Haggis" Woods

AGE: 48
HOMETOWN: Pepperell, MA
GUITARS: EVH Wolfgang Standard, Jackson Adrian Smith SDXQ, Dean Dave Mustaine Zero "A Tout LeMonde"
SONGS I'VE BEEN PLAYING: Dokken "It's Not Love," Black Sabbath "Black Sabbath," My Dissident Sentry band's originals
GEAR I MOST WANT: Marshall JCM 800, Gibson Slash Les Paul Standard

Are you a Defender of the Faith? Send a photo, along with your answers to the questions above, to **GWSoundingBoard@futurenet.com**. And pray!

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Blake Ibanez's New Trip

THE DALLAS RIFF MASTER RESURRECTED CROSSOVER THRASH WITH POWER TRIP; NOW HE'S BACK WITH FUGITIVE

By Jim Beaugez

BELOVED CROSSOVER THRASHERS Power Trip were poised to return the heavy metal crown to their hometown of Dallas, where their forebears Pantera created some of the genre's most brutal riffs and grooves in the Nineties. But then the unthinkable happened.

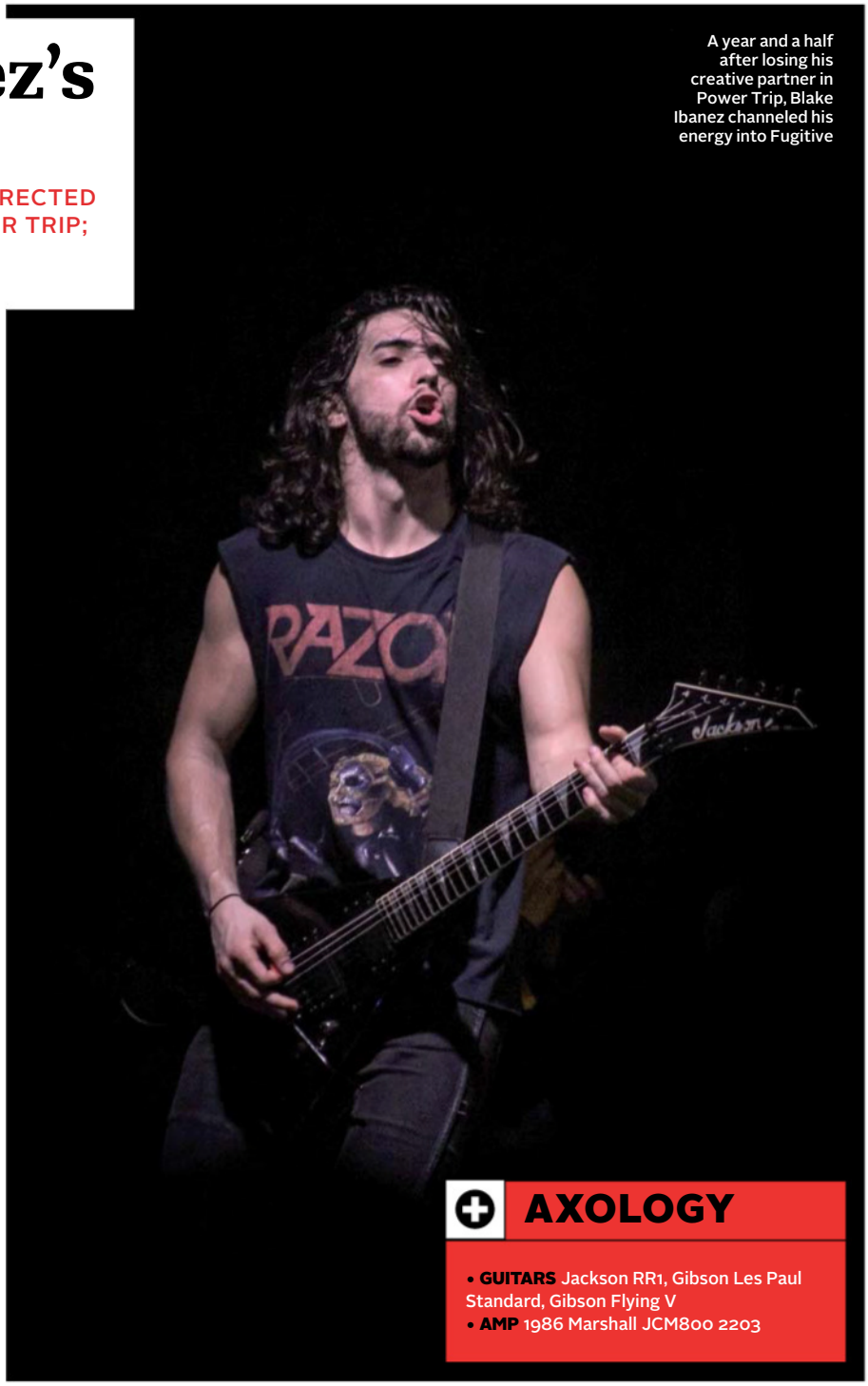
Two and a half years to the day after releasing their now-classic 2017 album, *Nightmare Logic*, vocalist Riley Gale died of an accidental overdose on the eve of a European tour with Lamb of God and Kreator.

When the news broke, guitarist Blake Ibanez, who was responsible for the bruising riffs behind Power Trip's whiplash hardcore, put down his guitar and didn't touch it for months. Ibanez had formed the band with Gale in 2008, and the loss left him directionless and reeling.

"At some point I just was like, I've gotta move forward," Ibanez says. "I can't let this slow me down or rule my life. It's a really tragic, sad thing, but this type of stuff happens in life, and unfortunately to a lot of people. I had to accept the circumstances. So, I kept writing."

A year and a half after losing his creative partner in Power Trip, Ibanez decided to channel his energy in a new direction. He formed a new band, Fugitive, with friends from Texas hardcore bands like Creeping Death and Skourge, and picked up second guitarist Victor Gutierrez of Impaler.

The band's debut EP, *Maniac*, released in August 2022, picks up where Power Trip was sadly cut short. On their first four slabs of thrash — plus a cover of "Raise the Dead" by Swedish black metal pioneers Bathory to round out the five-song set — Ibanez explores outside of Power Trip's



A year and a half after losing his creative partner in Power Trip, Blake Ibanez channeled his energy into Fugitive

AXOLOGY

- **GUITARS** Jackson RR1, Gibson Les Paul Standard, Gibson Flying V
- **AMP** 1986 Marshall JCM800 2203

RIGHT: PROVIDED/PR TOP: SCOTT LEGATO/GETTY IMAGES

"Anything that's valuable or worth doing in your life takes a lot of work, and it's not easy. I'm glad I decided to do it"

Ibanez, playing a Jackson. "When you're in a band or an artist of any kind, I don't think you really are fulfilled unless you're putting stuff out there or performing," he says

established sound without losing the plot.

"Fugitive has the same attack and tightness thing that Power Trip has, but there's a little more room to swing around and play some groovier riffs than maybe what Power Trip would do," Ibanez says. "It's a little less rigid in terms of the style."

The band lays down a groove-metal grind on "The Javelin," *Maniac*'s opening instrumental, before segueing into breakneck thrash on the title cut. They split the difference on "Hell's Half-Acre," which roars from a frenetic pace to a dirge-like lurch for the final minute and a half.

But throughout *Maniac*'s 17-minute runtime, the guitars sound heavier than anything Power Trip released — a trait attributed to Ibanez writing in the key of D, a full-step down from E, where Power Trip and heroes like Metallica, Leeway and Vio-Lence played. The switch came during his downtime after Gale's death, when he kept a few of his guitars tuned to D so he could learn some songs and riffs in that tuning. It stuck, and it helped Fugitive create a sound apart from Power Trip.

"Whenever I picked [*one of those guitars*] up to play, I would be like, 'Oh, this is kind of fun — this is a different vibe,'" he says. "And you know, certain riffs sound better a little down-tuned. It just sounds a little darker. So it opened up some new doors to play some different things. It was refreshing, 'cause if I kept playing in E and tried to do another band, it would probably just sound like Power Trip."

Ibanez is mindful to use the other instruments around him and the art of timing to make riffs hit the listener in a heavy way, not unlike the interplay between Dimebag and Vinnie Paul on the brutal breakdown in Pantera's "Primal Concrete Sledge." "I'm always thinking of the drums when I write a riff," he says. "Generally, I like it when there's a lot of spacing between the riff and the kick pattern — like a single-kick pattern, something that leaves a lot of room for the riff to bounce around and hit on the snare at the right point."

Another indispensable part of the equation for Ibanez is his tone, which is usually his Jackson Randy Rhoads V through the Marshall JCM800 he used on *Nightmare Logic* and everything he's done since. On *Maniac*, though, he tracked with a pair of Gibsons — a Les Paul Standard to beef up his new riffs, and a Flying V outfitted with a Kahler tremolo for leads.

While Power Trip's future is in limbo — even though Ibanez and drummer Chris Ulsh have played together some, and Ibanez already wrote the band's third album — Fugitive is clearly Ibanez's main focus for the foreseeable future.

"When you're in a band or an artist of any kind, I don't think you really are fulfilled unless you're putting stuff out there or performing," he says. "But if you're not doing either of those things, then you don't feel very fulfilled at all.

"Anything that's valuable or worth doing in your life takes a lot of work, and it's not easy," he adds. "So I'm glad I decided to do it."

INTRODUCING

Pigs, Pigs, Pigs, Pigs, Pigs, Pigs, Pigs

Land of Sleeper (Missing Piece Records)

SOUND U.K.-based Pigsx7's sonic signature is a unique combo of spacer-rock grooves allied to a pulverizing Sabbath-like attack. Guitarists Sam Grant and Adam Sykes channel the spirit of Iommi filtered through the spacey ambience of Hawkwind — although a hefty dose of doom infects many of the songs, avoiding an overdose of trippiness.

KEY TRACK "Pipe Down!"

Girish and the Chronicles

Back on Earth (Frontiers)

SOUND GATC hail from Bangalore, India, but actually sound like they came straight off the Sunset Strip in 1983. Think the very best of hair metal with the added bite of NWOBHM. Vocalist Girish Pradhan's vocals deliver the perfect mix of attitude and arrogance, and guitarist Suraz Sun adroitly ticks every box on the guitar hero checklist.

KEY TRACK "Born with a Big Attitude"

Hard Wax

Don't Stop the Beat (Rebellion Records)

SOUND These U.K. street-punk-rockers combine the kind of hook-filled soccer-terrace anthems, à la Slade, with a no-nonsense urgency that delivers the take-no-prisoners approach of the best of the glory years of punk. Mainman Tom Boutwood's iconic guitar lines perfectly channel the spirit of rebellion.

KEY TRACK "Don't Stop the Beat"

— *Mark McStea*

FROM LEFT: ANIA SHRIMPTON PRABAL DEEP KEVIN WINIKER ABOVE: PROVIDED/PR

INQUIRER
JIM BABJAK

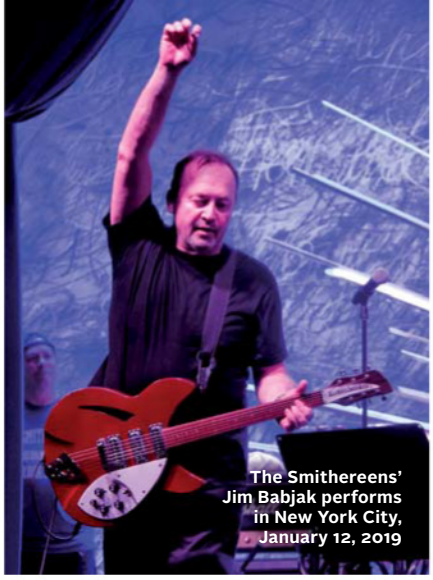
THE SMITHEREENS GUITARIST TALKS EMBARRASSING MOMENTS — AND WHAT IT'S LIKE TO HAVE INFLUENCED KURT COBAIN

Q: What was your first guitar?
I got my first guitar in 1969 when I was 12. It was a cheap Teisco that came with an amp made out of plastic. Both didn't last very long. The strings were so far away from the neck, it was horrible. I probably would have learned to play better and quicker if I had a better guitar as it took me many years. A couple years later, I got a Gibson SG-200 — and that wasn't so great either.

Q: Do you remember your first gig?
It was in 1971; I was playing that SG-200 at an eighth-grade dance. I was a freshman at high school at that point. The band was Cold Steel or Back to Earth — I can't recall which one because I was in two different bands. It was also the first time I sang in public too. I got $150 for the gig, which was a lot of money back then, and I thought it was fantastic.

Q: Ever had an embarrassing moment on stage?
This is terrible to admit but on our first tour of Europe, we did a show in Iceland, where we had two sold out nights at the Opera House; our record had gone to No. 1 there, which I guess was because we were about to visit there as not too many bands tended to go to Iceland. I was in my Keith Moon phase and drinking a lot. And when I got there at the time, I found out they didn't sell beer. It was only non- alcoholic beer, but they did sell hard alcohol. So I mixed Jack Daniels with beer. Horrible combination. Then we're onstage playing and the audience were loving it, but I couldn't wait for the set to end because I had to go to the bathroom! So, we're doing "Blood and Roses" as our last song before the encore — and I didn't make it. There was this nice puddle in front of my amp. Embarrassing for me and the band but nobody in the audience knew, so this is the first time anybody is hearing about it!

Q: What's your favorite piece of gear?
I've always stuck to a 100-watt Marshall 800 series classic with the master volume. I hardly use any pedals as I love the pure sound of the guitar going through the Marshall. I can usually get what I want by just the volume control on my guitar, especially with the '52 reissue Tele I bought in 1994.


The Smithereens' Jim Babjak performs in New York City, January 12, 2019

Q: What's your proudest guitar moment on a Smithereens track?
There's a song on our first album [Especially for You, *1986*] called "Time and Time Again." I was told it was going to have a fadeout [*ending*], and the three of us — bass, drums and guitar — were being recorded live. We're playing away and the song is ending, and so whatever I played on that is whatever was going on in my head, just spur of the moment. I threw everything in it, [*including*] the kitchen sink. I even did a Dick Dale "Pipeline" lick. When we were done, we went into the control room and our producer Don Dixon said, "Wow, we're keeping that; it's not gonna be a fadeout now."

Q: What advice would you give to young guitar players?
Just play from the heart. I see a lot of kids going through this "School of Rock" stuff, learning how to be a rock star, but I don't know — something just doesn't come out right. They all sound the same. Not to put it down, but you need to get your own style.

Q: What makes a perfect guitar solo?
For me it's always been about melody. As much as I love Hendrix and all that, and I do throw in a bit of that stuff too, and since I never learned theory or scales and I play by ear, my solos are just melodies I have in my head. And they're either counter melodies to the song or whatever fits with the song.

Q: How do you feel about Kurt Cobain counting the Smithereens as a major influence on Nirvana?
I wish I had met him as I never did get a chance. We worked with Butch Vig on a song once and he told us that when Nirvana was working on *Nevermind,* they were A-B-ing my guitar sound, and trying to replicate that sound. So, I'm truly honored. — *Joe Matera*

WHAT'S ON MY PLAYLIST

RONALD LANDA
OF DELAIN

1
Alter Bridge
"Blackbird"
Mark Tremonti really is a true genius in the art of riff writing. He creates riffs that tell the listeners stories. They grab the listener, take them places. The intro/verse is the perfect example of that.

2
Metallica
"Unforgiven II"
For years I struggled to play the verse of this song; I couldn't figure out how to play those sliding notes. I finally found out James Hetfield was using a B-bender, which I'd never heard of before. I thought it was such a brilliant invention, so I bought a B-bender immediately.

3
Steely Dan
"Pretzel Logic"
The soloing is just perfect in arrangement, playing and tone (notice the very, very last part right before and during the fade out). Walter Becker used to hire all sorts of great guitar players to play leads on Steely Dan records, but this one he played himself.

4
Katatonia
"Leaders"
The use of guitars to create atmosphere is perfectly displayed in this song. The guitar sound, the brilliant use of effects, the arrangements — they all contribute to an atmosphere that haunts you.

5
Elizabeth Cotten
"Freight Train"
Elizabeth was one of the best acoustic guitar players, and she wrote this song when she was 12. Isn't that something? Fun fact: The left-handed Elizabeth played her right-handed guitar upside down, playing the bass notes with her fingers and the melody with her thumb.

DELAIN'S NEW ALBUM, *DARK WATERS*, IS OUT FEBRUARY 10 ON NAPALM RECORDS.

BABJAK: DEBRA L ROTHENBERG/GETTY IMAGES PLAYLIST: ALEX STALTARI

"In a perfect world, I could alternate between making my own records and hitting the road with other artists," Andrea Benz says. "As long as I'm playing guitar, I'm pretty happy"

Andrea Benz

THIS SWISS-BORN GUITARIST MOVED TO NASHVILLE TO MAKE HER COUNTRY-SHRED DREAMS COME TRUE — AND THEY HAVE!

By Joe Bosso

GROWING UP IN her homeland of Switzerland, Andrea Benz was absolutely certain that she was destined to be a country music guitar player. "It all started the night I watched the CMAs [*Country Music Awards*] on TV with my parents," she says. "I was already playing the guitar as a hobby, but when I saw Brad Paisley on that show, I said, 'That's what I'm going to do.'"

After mastering Paisley's solo to "Mud on the Tires" ("I practiced it day and night for weeks"), Benz started to study the guitar licks of players like Danny Gatton, Albert Lee and Roy Nichols. "I gravitated toward players who had a clean sound. I wasn't much into distortion," she says. "Brent Mason became a real favorite of mine. He just encapsulates everything I love, and his chicken pickin' is second to none."

With two music degrees under her belt, Benz set off to go pro in Europe. "Country is popular there, but it's tough if you want to play original music," she says. "I would play in cover bands on weekends, but it was hard to make a living off it. After a while, I said, 'It's time to move to where it's happening.'"

Arriving in Nashville three years ago, Benz quickly found employment as lead guitarist for country singer Karen Waldrup. At the same time, she played solo shows around town and began recording her own songs. Her just-released debut album, *Who I Am*, is full of spunky, engaging gems like "That's How a Country Girl Gets the Blues" and "Plains of Montana" that showcase Benz's crystal-clear singing voice and impeccable guitar chops. "I tried to plan out my solos in advance, but I always throw a little improv in. Whatever the moment calls for," she says.

Benz is hoping *Who I Am* launches her career as a solo star, but she's not ruling out side-person gigs. "I absolutely love being the lead guitar player in a band — *any* band," she says. "In a perfect world, I could alternate between making my own records and hitting the road with other artists. As long as I'm playing guitar, I'm pretty happy."

"Brent Mason became a real favorite. He encapsulates everything I love, and his chicken pickin' is second to none"

AXOLOGY

- **GUITAR** Fender Deluxe Nashville Telecaster
- **AMP** Peavey Classic 30 112, Dr. Z Z-Wreck
- **EFFECTS** MXR Dyna Comp, MXR Carbon Copy

PATRICK MARSEK

Katatonia guitarist (and Mayones fan) Anders Nyström

"How hard you hit the strings, where on the fretboard you pick, how you slide and glide from note to note… it all adds up to create your [personal] touch"
— ANDERS NYSTRÖM

Katatonia

NOT THE WELSH CATATONIA WITH A C — THE SWEDISH ROCKERS RETURN WITH THE LESS-THAN-JOLLY *SKY VOID OF STARS*

By Gregory Adams

KATATONIA'S *SKY VOID* *of Stars* marks the second album in a row to not feature songs by founding guitarist Anders Nyström — as with 2020's *City Burials*, the band's 12th long-player was helmed completely by vocalist Jonas Renske. But when it comes to how the Swedish six-stringer interprets his bandmate's material — via percussively progressive riffage and a foreboding miasma of ambient effects-work — the gloom veteran is anything but muted on Katatonia's latest release.

"Just by playing the guitar — and using different guitars — you leave your signature stamp on everything," Nyström says of his impact on *Sky Void of Stars*. "Things like how hard you hit the strings, where on the fretboard you pick, what kind of vibrato you put in there, how you slide and glide from note to note… it all adds up to create your [*personal*] touch."

If the experimental *City Burials* put a greater emphasis on synths and electronic production, *Sky Void of Stars* runs Katatonia's guitars back toward the red. "Birds" is a pulse pounder full of fervent power-chording; deceptively-titled opener "Austerity" buzzes out the gate with densely distorted djenting, before lead guitarist Roger Öjersson unveils a doom-dripping vibrato lead. "There are some serious progressive moments coupled with some almost commercial pop stuff, but everything carries a deeper kind of darkness embedded within it," Nyström suggests of the hook-loaded yet downcast drive of *Sky Void of Stars*.

Though Nyström and Öjersson get defiantly chunky in spots, Nyström also approaches Katatonia with an airier guitar style he calls "ventiler" (which is the Swedish word for valve). Using a heady stew of effects, the guitarist widens the scope of melancholy Katatonia rockers like "Opaline" with drawn-out gusts of sonic ambiance. "The sound is made of a lot of compressed distortion, different delays, modulated reverb, flanger, pitch shifter, sustainer, and a slow gear effect to knock off the attack and make it swell in and out," he reveals, adding of the elemental results, "It sometimes resembles a crying whale, or a wind blowing."

While playing a more supportive role on *Sky Void of Stars*, Nyström says he's still got riffs that could make Katatonia's gloriously gloomy songbook one day. "Time shall tell if I manage to put some more flesh around those bones," he muses, adding of a return to songwriting, "I surely miss spending time in this magic creative phase and I hope it can come back and meet me halfway in the dark, where I used to dwell."

AXOLOGY

- **GUITARS** Mayones Regius, Mayones Setius, Mayones Legend, Mayones Vidius (Nyström); Schecter Ultra III, Schecter Ultra II, Schecter Sun Valley Super Shredder Exotic (Öjersson)
- **AMPS** Blackstar Amped 1 (Nyström); MLC SubZero 100
- **LIVE EFFECTS** Boss GT-1000 (both)

WILL IRELAND

[*from left*] Doll Spirit Vessel's Max Holbrook, Kati Malison and Lewis Brown (on bass)

Doll Spirit Vessel

SHAPE-SHIFTING PHILLY INDIE ROCK SHOEGAZERS DISCUSS THE ART OF COLLABORATION

By Jim Beaugez

PHILLY INDIE ROCKERS Doll Spirit Vessel pair two opposing schools of thought in guitar playing — the untrained and instinctual with the well-learned and intentional — to great effect on *What Stays*, the band's debut album.

"My approach to guitar has always been very explorative," says vocalist and guitarist Kati Malison, who sits in the former camp. "It's not like I study chord shapes as much as just what I feel like sounds good, which I think for all the songs on this record was how I ended up writing them."

Led by the bouncy earworm singles "Train Brain Rot" and "Sun Death," *What Stays* draws from a reservoir of Nineties indie-rock charms. Malison and her classically trained bandmates Max Holbrook and Lewis Brown, who shared guitar and bass duties on the album, cast their quiet-loud-quiet dynamics in shoegazing clean tones and crunching distortion.

In keeping with Malison's adventurous spirit, she and her bandmates didn't play a note of music together, in person, until they plugged in to record *What Stays*, which she engineered at a rented house in Oregon during a two-week session. Holbrook and Lewis helped shape Malison's arrangements, and their experimentation led to several musical breakthroughs.

"Guitar and tone wise, on 'All the Right Things in All the Right Order'," we had to really think about tone going from each section, 'cause it's such an epic," Malison says. "We were trying to get the dream-pop feeling, and then a very grungy feeling in the section after that, and having it feel cohesive and like the tone was the same song throughout."

On the closing track, "A Light," Malison, Lewis and Brown create a lulling, enveloping soundscape, while pushing the pulsing "Small Mass" to a crescendo of tuneful and dissonant notes. "I love the interplay on ['*Small Mass*'], and I think structurally and harmonically that's a great example of taming something that is, at times, very discordant."

Ultimately, the band members' differences in musical training is a strength for Doll Spirit Vessel. "I love playing with people who don't come from a formal [*musical*] background, 'cause they're always coming up with ideas that aren't limited by those types of things," Holbrook says. "It helps me explore. Kati's approach to guitar parts and melodies, and songs in general, is a really good example of that."

"I love playing with people who don't come from a formal [musical] background"
— MAX HOLBROOK

PROVIDED/PR

AXOLOGY

- **GUITARS:** Epiphone Wilshire (Malison); 1965 Gibson Melody Maker (Holbrook); Fender Jaguar (Brown)
- **AMPS:** Fender Hot Rod DeVille 212, Blackstar Studio 10 KT-88 (all)

[*left*] Fredrik Åkesson's pedalboard and [*below*] Åkesson in action with Opeth

MY PEDALBOARD
FREDRIK ÅKESSON

WHAT THE BLAZING OPETH GUITARIST, GHOST CONTRIBUTOR AND ARCH ENEMY VETERAN SEES WHEN HE LOOKS DOWN

Interview by Amit Sharma

"HERE'S THE PEDALBOARD I've been using for the last few Opeth runs. I tend to change my overdrive pedal a lot; right now it's the Seymour Duncan 805. It has a three-band EQ, which I use for slightly cutting the mids and adding bass. The DryBell Vibe Machine has more warmth than other vibes I've tried and sounds just like those classic recordings. I also like that you have bright and custom settings, as well as a vibrato mode. I'll use it for the clean parts of 'Face of Melinda' or 'Burden' and the shreddy fusion solo in 'Nepenthe.'

"This Boss OC-2 is from the mid Eighties. I bought it from Göran Elmquist from Sound of Silence, the local rig builder who looks after Opeth. He's like the Swedish Bob Bradshaw! The Fuzztner is made by Olsson Amps; it does the octave-up thing — we use it for the ending of 'Heart in Hand' and 'All Things Will Pass' to make the choruses feel more explosive. The MXR Phase 95 sounds brilliant; it's like the original but has more features so I end up using it a lot for leads. Sometimes I might do the Frank Marino thing: turn it up aggressively with some fuzz and shred through some blues. I love that shit!

"I only use the [*TC Electronic*] Flashback 2 for what I call 'psycho effects' to create oscillating, chaotic sounds at the end of songs, while turning up the fuzz or distortion. The Strymon Volante is handling all my ambiences, thanks to its great spring reverb. It's hooked up to the switching system via MIDI, so I can preset tempos for certain songs that might need a special delay time. It's also nice to turn it off whenever I play a fast lick in a solo and then kick it back in on a high note with lots of vibrato. The wah is a [*Dunlop*] Cry Baby 95Q. And I use the Tiger Lily Tremolo by One Control for the ambient parts in 'The Drapery Falls.' It's good, but I'll be switching back to my MXR M305 soon."

■ IF I HAD TO CHOOSE ONLY ONE PEDAL FOR A FULL SHOW:

"I recently picked up Joe Bonamassa's [*Way Huge*] Penny Saver Royale Modulation & Overdrive. It works nicely for both clean and heavier tones. Normally I'd pick something like the [*Dunlop*] Echoplex Delay, but this has quickly become one of my favorite pedals."

Wanna see someone's pedalboard? Let us know! Write to GWsoundingBoard@futurenet.com.

The Single-cut Strut

10 YOUNG GUNS WHO ARE MAKING THE LES PAUL COOL AGAIN

By Andrew Daly

THE SEVENTIES WERE defined by the earliest wave of proverbial guitar gods — giant-slayers posturing at the stage's edge, casting their lurid spells over unwitting audiences. The preeminent choice of magic wand? The Gibson Les Paul. But as the Eighties surged, the Les Paul's fall was steep. Coinciding with that tumble from grace was a rise to prominence for technicolor, hot-rodded rigs. These seemingly mutant creations crafted in presto guitar labs were suddenly slung over the sweaty shoulders of droves of MTV-era icons.

Through synchronized bombast, this new generation of heroes wielded Jacksons, ESPs, haywire B.C. Rich rigs and eye-catching Ibanez JEMs. There was, of course, one notable exception: Slash, who is widely credited as saving the single-cut during the shred era. The Nineties would also prove challenging for the Les Paul, with alternative and indie six-stringers taking to Fender Jaguars, beat-up Strat, twangy Telecasters and 12-string Epiphones instead of the load-bearing stalwart. Now, that's not to say the Les Paul died entirely; it's always had its supporters. But somewhere along the way, it became *chic* to eschew Les Pauls in favor of various new kids on the block.

There are still plenty of Frankenstein rigs strewn across stages worldwide. But finally, it seems the Les Paul is experiencing its rebirth. With the resurgence of classic rock among young listeners and the resultant forming of "new wave of classic rock" bands, Les Pauls are once again being brandished by the masses. Some may lean on other guitars or deny the Les Paul's versatility, but in the modern age, many young guns are making the model cool again.

What follows are 10 players, all of whom are giving the Gibson Les Paul a new lease on life.

10. Dane Pieper (Classless Act)

CLASSLESS ACT TOOK the world by storm with their debut record, *Welcome to the Show*, which coincided with their inclusion as openers for the Stadium Tour — which featured Def Leppard, Poison, Joan Jett and Mötley Crüe — last summer. And while Griffin Tucker often gets the lion's share of attention, Classless Act's über-energetic rhythm guitarist Dane Pieper steals the show. Pieper is a ball of fury known to jump and jive while slicing through heavy riffs. He'll often execute Eddie Van Halen-inspired kickflips and David Lee Roth-esque mid-air splits while jumping off the drum riser, all while delivering bone-crushing rhythms.

9. Sammy Boller

DETROIT NATIVE SAMMY Boller owns other guitars, and he even breaks them out for a solo now and again. But the blond-haired axman is most often seen with his beautiful black Les Paul, with the occasional goldtop sprinkled in for good measure. Considered one of the most promising young guns in the game after six years as the lead guitarist of Citizen Zero, Boller delivered on the early praise heaped onto his instrumental record *Kingdom of the Sun* (2020). As one of the most versatile new players, there's no telling what he'll do next, but he's undoubtedly someone to keep an eye on.

8. Graham Whitford (Tyler Bryant & the Shakedown)

GRAHAM WHITFORD'S CLAIM to fame was most often the fact that his father, Brad Whitford, is the rhythm guitarist for Aerosmith. But all that changed when Whitford met Tyler Bryant. After joining Bryant's namesake group, the Shakedown, it was apparent that Whitford's Les Paul-wielding ways complimented Bryant's Strat adoration perfectly. And while you might think that joining forces with the likes of Bryant could lead to Whitford being overshadowed, if the group's latest record, *Shake the Roots*, is any indication, the pair are in perfect lockstep.

7. Whitney Petty (Thunderpussy)

SEATTLE NATIVE WHITNEY Petty's glam rock-steeped tradition can only be described as a superstock of molten lava delivered via a Rola amp. With some help from Mike McCready, Thunderpussy broke through in 2018 after releasing their self-titled debut record. With tongue-in-cheek camp for days and a gloriously obscene singer/guitarist dynamic between Molly Sides and Petty, Thunderpussy are just what the doctor ordered. But it's Petty's hair-raising swagger, delivered through her vintage sunburst Les Paul, that defines Thunderpussy's glam-inspired sound.

6. Joanne Shaw Taylor

WITH A LES PAUL in hand at age 16, Joanne Shaw Taylor caught her first big break. Blues-driven stardom was inevitable for Taylor; still, her discovery by Eurythmics' Dave Stewart came via an unlikely scenario, which saw Stewart first lay eyes and ears on the young talent at a breast cancer benefit for her mother. Stewart knew talent when he saw it and immediately invited the teen phenom to join his group D.U.P. In the 20 years since, usually with any number of Les Pauls in hand, Taylor has self-managed her solo career to acclaim, with the best most definitely yet to come.

5. John Notto (Dirty Honey)

IF THERE'S ONE guitarist on the scene today who is most associated with the "new wave of classic rock," it's John Notto. Still without major label support (by choice), Notto has ascended the the upper echelons of guitardom solely by the merit of his playing alone. As such, the always self-assured Massachusetts native is no dummy; he knows when to hold serve and leave well enough alone. To that end, Notto keeps it simple: slick, blues-inspired riffs, played via a Les Paul seemingly plucked from the hands of Sixties-era Peter Green.

4. Tristan Thomas (Florence Black)

NOT EVERY NEW kid on the block lives to recreate Seventies classic rock. Just ask Florence Black's Tristan Thomas, whose hyper-melodic tendencies will leave fans of Nineties alt-rock feeling like they've entered a time machine. Truth be told, Black's sound contains references to every era, with his weighty riffs channeling from his fingers through his sunburst Les Paul and out his classic Marshall stacks. When listening to Thomas, it's as if Dr. Frankenstein has harvested the collective talents of Slash, Dave Grohl and Ace Frehley and then combined them into one super-titan of rock.

PHILLIP FARAONE/GETTY IMAGES FOR GIBSON

With the resurgence of classic rock among young listeners and the resultant forming of "New Wave of Classic Rock" bands, Les Pauls are once again being brandished by the masses

3. Jackie Venson

WITH HER EPIPHONE Les Paul in hand, Jack Venson's fretwork is a vision of sage beauty. A native of Austin and a graduate of the Berklee College of Music, the six-stringer has spent the last decade staking her claim among a male-dominated scene. While it might have been easy to secure a foothold in rock alone, across three studio records, several live records and multitudes of EPs, Venson has slayed multiple dragons, logging miles as a road warrior in the blues, soul and pop scenes to boot.

2. Ally Venable

IT'S BEEN A while since a talent like Ally Venable hit the rock and blues scenes. But if Venable's 2021 record *Heart of Fire* is any indication, the road ahead for the player Mike Zito lovingly refers to as "Texas Honey" is paved in pure, unadulterated gold. On the surface, you might assume the red-haired spitfire is flaunting yet another run-of-the-mill Les Paul. But the 23-year-old blues-breaker prefers a magenta-colored rig, which Gibson made in very limited numbers in the Nineties.

1. Jared James Nichols

AT 33, JARED James Nichols is an established name on the rock and blues circuits. Always bursting with energy, Nichols is perhaps best known for his "pick-less" playing technique. But then again, Nichols' guitar lineup — featuring his single-pickup "Old Glory" Epiphone Les Paul and a red 1953 model the bluesman has named "Ole Red" — make for an alluring aesthetic, too. It takes skill to carry the weight of a power trio, but Nichols does so effortlessly. Each generation has a handful of players who will be remembered forever. Nearly a decade into his career, it appears that Jared James Nichols is this era's ultimate Les Paul-loving icon.

Ally Venable performs at the NAMM Show in Anaheim, California, January 16, 2020

The Boneshakers' Randy Jacobs in action last summer with a custom Grosh Electra Jet VT

"Playing in the studio is cool, but playing in front of people is the magic"
— RANDY JACOBS

The Boneshakers

ACCLAIMED SOUL/FUNK/ROCK/BLUES GUITARIST RANDY JACOBS JOINS FORCES WITH POWERHOUSE BLUES SINGER JENNY LANGER ON *ONE FOOT IN THE GROOVE*

By Chris Gill

GUITARIST RANDY JACOBS found himself at a crossroads about 25 years ago. Since the early Eighties he was a member of the band Was (Not Was), and thanks to his work on projects produced by bandmate Don Was he became an in-demand session player, recording with artists like B.B. King, Bonnie Raitt, Seal and Tears For Fears. When Was decided to break up the band in the mid Nineties and focus exclusively on production, Jacobs faced a decision between pursuing session work or starting a new band.

Jacobs chose the latter, forming the Boneshakers with his Was (Not Was) bandmate singer Sweet Pea Atkinson. "(Studio guitarist) Michael Thompson asked if I was afraid about losing my place as a session player by going out on the road, but that's who I am," Jacobs says. "Playing in the studio is cool, but playing in front of people is the magic. I love when I can feel that I'm raising them up from the beginning of a solo to the groove at the end of a song. To me, that is everything."

In early 2022, Jacobs joined forces with blues singer Jenny Langer to record the latest Boneshakers album *One Foot in the Groove*. Recorded at Steve Lukather's Steakhouse studio, the album features guest appearances by guitarist Coco Montoya, Rolling Stones background vocalist Bernard Fowler and the Texacali Horns. Highlights include Jacobs' smoking slide on a soulful cover of the Stones' "Let's Spend the Night Together," his *Truth*-inspired wah on "Ain't Got the Fever No More" and the guitarist's signature tasteful funk rhythm work on "Mr. Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore."

The entire album was recorded live in the studio, with the band playing together in the main room while Langer sang from the vocal booth. "There's no click track," Jacobs adds. "That took me back. That's the way we used to do everything back in the Seventies when I was with Michael Henderson. I did the whole record using just a Strymon Iridium instead of an amp. I'm taking the same approach when we play live, but I'm now using the UA Dream '65, which can make even the crappiest rented amp sound *good*.

"Jenny really opened the door for me to go back and do what I really wanted to do, which is basically soul music with a little bit of rock, a whole lot of funk and a whole lot of blues," Jacobs says. "There's a lot of different styles, but the songs we chose work really well together. And Jenny is the real thing, which really inspires the whole band to dig deep and just groove."

AXOLOGY

- **GUITARS** Grosh Electra Jet VT and Retro Classics, PRS CE 24 Semi-Hollow
- **AMPS** Strymon Iridium, Universal Audio Dream '65 Reverb-Amp
- **EFFECTS** Dunlop CBJ95 Cry Baby Wah Junior, Xact XTS Atomic Overdrive

DOUG HARDESTY

"I think everyone had their own Covid story, but for me, I really just wanted to get better at adding layers in production," Marcos Mena says

Marcos Mena

FINALLY, SOME ULTRA-CLEAN TAPPING RIFFS AND COMPLEX CHORDS THAT YOU CAN DANCE (AND MARVEL) TO!

By Gregory Adams

AXOLOGY

- **GUITARS** Aristides custom T/O and Sterling by Music Man St. Vincent HH
- **EFFECTS** Seymour Duncan Vise Grip Compressor
- **AMP** Axe FX III

EVER SINCE YNGWIE Malmsteen descended from Mount Shred and single handedly invented the instrumental guitar album, scholars have debated one question: Can anyone dance to this stuff?

On *Fruit Town,* California-based guitar-and-drums duo Standards [*stylized as standards*] have finally proven that, despite near global doubt, it can be done.

Standards, the brainchild of Marcos Mena, have been kicking around for a few years, but on *Fruit Town* Mena's mad-scientist vision has truly come to fruition. Ultra-clean tapping riffs and complex chords get thrown around liberally, but despite Mena's extraordinary technique, he manages to keep any "Look at me!" instincts at bay.

"I think the important thing is writing the melody and the hook first and kind of working in all the other techniques and all the other stuff," Mena says. "I love all that stuff, but I feel like it's hard to stand out when everyone's focusing on chops and stuff. It's a lot more fun to write really fun melodies and focus on that — and then work in all the other stuff."

On *Fruit Town* Marcos Mena's mad-scientist vision has truly come to fruition

Instead, each display of guitar mastery serves to show off only Mena's even more virtuosic sense of melody and kinetic rhythms that may finally get guitar nerds to wiggle their butts as much as they do their fretting hands. The end result is a tight LP that's as refreshing as a fruit salad on a hot summer day.

That being said, for a few years, dancing was the last thing on most people's minds. While many of us were locked up at home, marathoning Hulu shows and having anxiety attacks, Mena was concentrating on improving not just his shredding, but his production techniques. His practice is noticeable in *Fruit Town,* which despite being relatively minimalist (the band is just two guys, after all) can also sound enormous. With standards planning on touring, recreating the sonic experience of the album will be a challenge Mena plans to meet with the help of backing tracks, but those tracks won't be aimed at faking having another guitarist on stage. Rather, they'll help capture the depth and fun weirdness that makes *Fruit Town* such a unique experience.

"I think everyone had their own Covid story, but for me, I really just wanted to get better at adding layers in production," Mena says. "I think we live in an age where guitarists are really infusing production. It goes beyond typical backing-track stuff or adding any vocal harmonies or any extra guitars. It's mostly about the other stuff, like the synths and the percussion and sound effects and stuff like that. I think it really elevates the band, as well as the entire album, to another level."

MAXX DIAZ

[*from left*] The Kinks' Mick Avory (on drums), Ray Davies and Dave Davies (with resonator) perform with a horn section in June 1972

RON HOARD/REDFERNS

MAKIN' TRACKS
DAVE DAVIES

THE KINKS LEGEND REVISITS TWO STARS OF THE BAND'S EARLY SEVENTIES OUTPUT, *MUSWELL HILLBILLIES* AND *EVERYBODY'S IN SHOW-BIZ*

By Joshua M. Miller

FOR KINKS GUITARIST Dave Davies, revisiting the seminal British band's 1971 album *Muswell Hillbillies* and 1972's *Everybody's in Show-Biz* with his brother — vocalist/guitarist Ray Davies — for a recently released pair of box sets was a tiring yet eye-opening endeavor. "I've never subjected myself to so much Kinks music in such a short space of time," he says. "It made me realize how hard we worked. I couldn't do it like that now. Touring schedules are really hard work."

The process also gave him a chance to revisit the start of the band's most experimental era of music making. In the early Seventies, the Kinks were going on months-long stretches of touring the globe and enjoying immense popularity off hits such as "You Really Got Me," "Lola," "Apeman" and "Sunny Afternoon." That time on the road inspired the band to look into new genres of music, and when it came time to record *Muswell Hillbillies*, they decided to draw from their American influences, mainly country and blues. "A lot of the guitar playing was based on what I'd learned from American country music," he says.

Up next was the much more experimental *Everybody's in Show-Biz*, a double album that marked a true transition for the band. The Kinks had been friendly with U.K. jazz musician Mike Cotton — and several other jazz players — since the early Sixties, and they felt it was time to tap into some of that influence and experiment with "a bit of Dixieland and a bit of New Orleans jazz," Davies says. "I think it was a step in that direction. Whether it was the right one or wrong one, you don't know until you do it, but I think it helped us a lot. Sometimes expanding new ideas helps you as a musician; I think Ray wanted to experiment more than I did. The guys in the brass section were funny. They were bright and clever, but they were funny. Humor can sometimes provide different layers to tracks, and you can create a lot of humor in tonal qualities in certain instruments like the tuba."

Despite the changes — and yes, there are tubas present on *Everybody's in Show-Biz* — guitar remained a vital part of the Kinks' sound. The band's core remained the basic rock setup of guitar, bass and drums. "Then you got embellishments with the keyboards and a brass section that helped implement different arrangements," Davies says. "But still the heart of it is a rock 'n' roll live record, mainly."

Davies recalls using a lot of open tunings on his '54 Strat and doing the bulk of the slide work on his Martin. "You're using the same guitar to do different parts and the finger picking," he says. "It's really only three guitars I can recall that I used — my '54 Strat, a Tele and my Martins. Obviously, Ray used a Dobro for certain things, and there were other acoustic guitars that we used."

MUSWELL HILLBILLIES

"20th Century Man"

One of my favorite Ray songs. It's an important song on not just this album but any album, and it's still valid today. It's a very perceptive track with a great feel. It was a privilege to be a part of it. We were trying to get a sort of thoughtful, "Well, what's going to happen?" kind of mood and to keep the instruments more subdued. That's where I thought the slide guitar came in handy, and it really changes the mood. As with all of the tracks on *Muswell Hillbillies*, one of the reasons I used slides a lot was because it evokes a different feel, not nostalgic but wondering. The slide gave you a sense of wonder. The important thing about the arrangement that we used on the master is that it's kind of [*an*] undercurrent, underplayed. A track like that needs that underplaying.

"Skin and Bone"

That's a very typical, Kinks-like track. We liked to try and keep our humor in the music. It's funny, and it's about the time in that era before people really worked out in the gym like they do today. People didn't go to the gym much. So dancing was the main thing, dancing and exercising. It's got a funny chorus.

"Complicated Life"

It's a reminiscence about whatever you do, life is complicated. I used the slide to get a feeling of pondering what can happen. That's one of my favorite tracks, and it's simple as well. Sometimes you can say it a lot more in the simple configuration than you can [*when*] trying too hard.

"Here Come the People in Grey"

It reminds me of a comedy track called "They're Coming to Take Me Away, Ha-Ha!" [*Napoleon XIV, 1966*]. That was going through my mind as we were working out the vocal parts, but there's some great sections in that song. I love it when the electric guitar's holding it together at the beginning and the drums come in. It sets a really good rhythm... There's a point toward the end where it kind of speeds up. It's really cool.

"Holloway Jail"

All these characters in these songs were actually based on real people. The area near Holloway [*in London*] was where my family came from. There's an area called Caledonian Road. It's a road that leads right toward Kings Cross, and it goes by two prisons. There's Pentonville Prison and Holloway Jail. It's just reflections on society then, when we were growing up. I could play that country style, what I call [*my*] version of country vibe... I used open picking and the slide. We used several guitars, a Telecaster tuned to D and a Stratocaster, an old Strat from 1954. I had that guitar for years. I don't think I've got it anymore. I loved that guitar. A lot of the slide work was done on my Martin D-... [*Pauses*] It was a Martin D-something!

"Muswell Hillbilly"

There's that love and fondness for Americana and for country music because I had quite a big family, and all the great films like *South Pacific* and *Oklahoma!*, all these influences from the States were embedded in our culture when growing up. It was kind of like a London version of *The Beverly Hillbillies* in a humorous way. We had so many influences from America throughout our growing up and learning guitar. They were mostly American music influences, like country. Hank Williams had a great band with slide and fiddle. What a great band. We were lucky we had some great musical influences to draw on.

"Traveling with My Band"

It's Ray's tribute [*to touring*]. I like it. It's nice and self-explanatory.

EVERYBODY'S IN SHOW-BIZ

"Here Comes Yet Another Day"

That's a funny track. It's very much like what happens when you've been on the road because a lot of the album is about being on the road, and all these towns you're going to go through — Miami one day, San Francisco the next, then Chicago, then New York. It's all about waking up in a new place every day. It's an interesting song that fits in the heart of the whole.

"Unreal Reality"

When you're on the road, it is an unreal reality. It's like you're living in a dream, but it's real. It's an unreal reality, just touring. Every day you're in a different place, and it can be a bit of a nightmare.

"Sitting in My Hotel"

It goes back to the touring thing [*again*], and every day you're at parties and the shows. You come back home to get a few hours' sleep before you start again. The rigors of touring. Every day's different, but it's the same.

"Motorway"

That's yet another great observation raised [*about touring*] — uncanny observations about what's going on. I think it's really, really good at that.

"You Don't Know My Name"

I was going through a tough time emotionally during '71, early '72, and it came to a head toward the end of that tour. I felt psychically, spiritually and emotionally kind of crippled in a way. My mental health was horrible. Then, really, [*there were*] the inner-observations I had about my own life. Sometimes you feel so crazy. You're rushing around, getting on planes and trains. You sometimes even question your own sanity. Is it me? Does anybody know my name? Who am I? Weird and wonderful — but a crazy world.

"Supersonic Rocket Ship"

I have a special love for that track because it's got a great optimism about it. It's also got a lot of sarcasm. It's a lovely blend of [*both*], plus reality and dysfunction — but also hope.

"Celluloid Heroes"

One of my favorite songs — ever, by anybody. I remember when we were just starting out down the road with tidying up the lyrics. That really filled me with a lot of emotion because it is quite an incredible idea anyway, all those [*movie*] stars, names and handprints being on those stars. There are all these great stars immortalized on pavement, in concrete. Funny enough, I think one of my favorite versions of that song is a live version that's not on the album, and it's got a standard guitar solo at the front. Hopefully, we might put it out on a later release. I used my Martin mainly on that, and it's simple. Keep it simple and effective.

QUOTABLE

Q: FROM ELVIS COSTELLO TO LARKIN POE TO YOU

"When we were touring with Elvis Costello, we were eating lunch and he was expounding on the importance of not putting yourself in a box," says Larkin Poe's Rebecca Lovell. "He is the perfect example of an artist who has had an incredibly diverse career. He does whatever he wants to do, and the thread that connects it all is that it's Elvis Costello. He was telling us, **'People will try to attach specific genre tags to you. Keep them guessing. Just go where your heart tells you to go.** Let your fans trust that you're going to curate something that they will love regardless of genre.'"

— *Jenna Scaramanga*

Q: KANE ROBERTS ON RETURNING TO ALICE COOPER'S BAND

"So, what I did was I would drop out during the verse to give the song some breathing room. And when I did that, there would only be the two guitars playing. And then I'd come back in during the next section or the chorus. It depended on the song, but overall, I wanted to clean up some of the sound because it was very dense in terms of the amount of guitar going on. There are also a lot of guitar solos, and my solos are radically different from the other two guys — as they should be. That's the point. So it turned into something where I was a part of a music project that I was stepping into instead of dominating. **I think a lot of people thought I would come in and dominate the whole thing, but that wasn't the case.** I have a ton of respect for [*guitarists*] Ryan [*Roxie*] and Tommy [*Henriksen*]'s abilities and what they've been doing all these years in Alice's band, and I wanted to honor that."

— *Andrew Daly*

From GuitarWorld.com

PHOTO OF THE MONTH

Jimmy Page [*left*] and Rory Gallagher hang out backstage at the Pistoia Blues Festival in Pistoia, Italy, July 16, 1984. Page performed as part of a tribute to U.K. blues great Alexis Korner, who had died that January at age 55. Gallagher played a full set that included "Double Vision," "Shin Kicker," Freddie King's "I'm Tore Down" and Muddy Waters' "I Wonder Who" — *DF*

JIMMY/RORY: LUCIANO VITI/CONTRIBUTOR/GETTY IMAGES LES PAUL: EPIPHONE

FIND YOURSELF JONESIN' FOR SOME ART?

In early December, Epiphone announced their new Adam Jones Art Collection, a series of seven limited-edition Les Pauls — limited to 800 units apiece — that each boast a different piece of fine art, as selected by the Tool guitarist. The first of these models is "The Veil of Bees" [*above*] which features some eye-catching artwork by Mark Ryden.

From the front, the model looks like what you'd expect from an Epiphone Adam Jones Les Paul Custom. Ryden's artwork, though, dominates the back of the body, with a special back plate commemorating the artist and the name of the work. The guitar features a design by artist Korin Faught at the back of the headstock, which — says Epiphone — will appear on all subsequent Adam Jones Art Collection models.

"I see the visual and the aural as equally important, with one bolstering the other," Jones said in a statement. "Mark's work is instantly recognizable, uniquely his own... What a perfect partner to kick off this series with."

The guitar sports a mahogany body and a maple top with seven-ply binding. The back and the headstock feature five-ply binding. The Adam Jones Custom Profile three-piece bound maple neck features a 24.75", 12" radius ebony fretboard with 22 medium frets, block inlays and a Graph Tech nut.

The guitar is available for $1,299. For more info, check out epiphone.com.

FROM THE GW ARCHIVES

Billy Corgan assesses Van Halen's *Fair Warning*

The album opens with an insane, virtuoso Eddie riff, daring you to try and play along. From there he drops us down and dirty into the 'Halen "Mean Street." The riffs are menacing, the lyrics nihilistic and the grooves taut and funky. "Dirty Movies" flashes a prom queen turned porno queen, then segues into the standard Van Halen breakdown with David Lee Roth encouraging her to "take it off, take it all off." Check out the third song, the double-timed "Sinners Swing!" A woman chases our humble 'Halen narrator. Does he want her, or does she want him? The shadows are never clear on this album. And Eddie is at his guitar meanest, sounding as if every track was was recorded late at night, cigarette in headstock and head down. Ed riffing into the cool California night.

"Unchained" is quintessential Van Halen. Taut voltage riffs slither into melodic lead drops, and yet another famous D.L.R. kickdown: "Give us a break, Dave." "One break — coming up!"

Fair Warning is consistently bluesy and unrepentant, with great titles like "Push Comes to Shove" and the classic "So This Is Love"? The guitar playing is vintage brown, all dirt and molasses. The album even ends oddly, the scythe-creep "Sunday Afternoon in the Park" giving way to "One Foot Out the Door," with Eddie soloing madly over out-of-control synths as Dave is chased by demons and someone's mean old man.,

Fair Warning opens a small window into the true night-world of Van Halen, moving at great speed. — *Billy Corgan*

From the April 1996 issue

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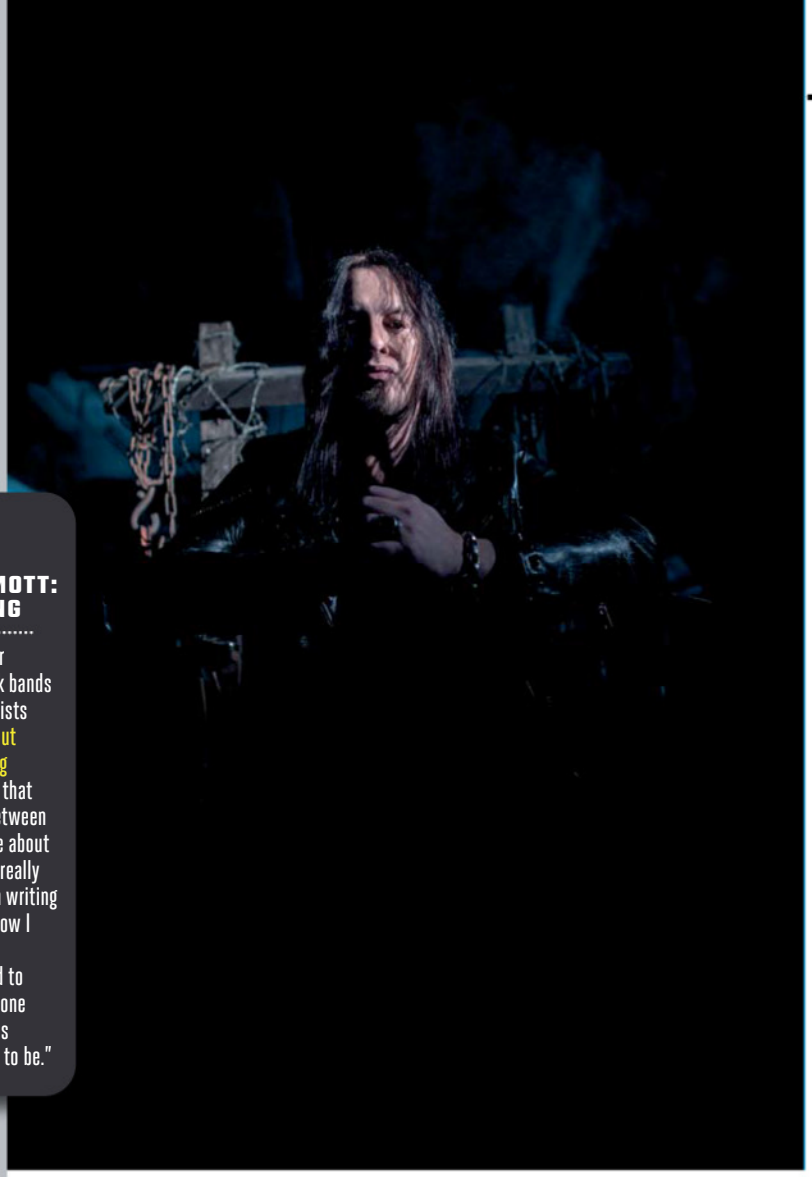

MICHAEL AMOTT: RHYTHM KING

"I think it works for straight-ahead rock bands to have both guitarists play the rhythms, but this isn't the Rolling Stones. There's not that playful interplay between guitarists. It's more about getting everything really tight. And since I'm writing it, I know exactly how I want it played, and sometimes it's hard to teach that to someone else so [*that*] it's as precise as it needs to be."

PATRIC ULLAEUS

ARCH ENEMY

"They said I ruined the band": Michael Amott looks back on his days with Carcass and recounts the creation of Arch Enemy's explosive new album, *Deceivers*

By Jon Wiederhorn

WITH HIS LONG black hair covering his eyes and much of his face, Arch Enemy founder Michael Amott sports a wide grin that belies the savagery of the band's melodic death metal as he saws into his white blood-spattered signature Dean Tyrant Bloodstorm guitar. Whether rooted in place next to vocalist Alissa White-Gluz, swaying along with fellow Swedish extreme metal veteran, bassist Sharlee D'Angelo, or playing back to back with guitarist Jeff Loomis, Amott unfurls rapid-fire riffs and sky-piecing solos with equal finesse, delighted to be onstage again in front of thousands of fans.

This particular gig, August 14 at the Alcatraz Festival in Kortrijk, Belgium, comes two days after Arch Enemy released their 11th studio album, *Deceivers*, one of the band's strongest and most eclectic offerings — which is saying a lot. Since he formed Arch Enemy in 1995, Amott has been the primary writer for the band's 11 consistently high-caliber albums, and the architect behind nine other records by his and D'Angelo's soulful stoner metal supergroup, Spiritual Beggars. Working with such a diverse range of rock has kept Amott creatively sated and helped him to weather various storms: stressful lineup and label shifts, shifting industry trends and, most recently, the Covid pandemic that prevented Loomis, the band's lead guitarist, from joining Arch Enemy in the studio.

"I don't like all the complications, of course, but writing a new album is super fun for me every time, no matter what," says Amott from his home in Sweden. "And I enjoy it so much, so there's never any lack of interest or ideas."

Amott's enthusiasm is infectious, and his abundant energy — at age 53 — resounds through *Deceivers*, the band's first album since 2017's *Will to Power*. *Deceivers* capitalizes on Arch Enemy's greatest strengths — crushing riffs, hooky guitar licks and an abundance of crafty rhythmic shifts, atmospheric arpeggios and multifaceted vocal cadences that create a striking balance of euphoric energy and unrelenting aggression. As soon as it was released, *Deceivers* was greeted with universal praise and continues to enthrall listeners, whose devotion has turned Arch Enemy into one of the most popular extreme metal bands. "Deceiver, Deceiver" has been streamed almost 7.5 million times on Spotify, and two other songs from *Deceivers*, "Handshake with Hell" and "House of Mirrors" each have accrued more than five million streams. For Amott, the goal wasn't to increase the band's profile or craft Arch Enemy's *raison d'etre*, but simply to use familiar elements to create a new batch of great authentic songs.

"We still have the same team and it's the same chefs in the kitchen," Amott says with confidence. "We all know what we can make, so we just said, 'Okay, let's come up with a new menu for this season.' And then you try to use all your ingredients in the

The comfy chair! Arch Enemy founder Michael Amott takes a breather

"WE DON'T EXPERIMENT WITH ELECTRONIC BEATS AND SAMPLES, AND WE'RE NOT GOING

best way possible."

In addition to talking to *Guitar World* about the excitement that fueled the creation of *Deceivers*, Amott addressed the challenges of being unable to get Loomis into the studio, Arch Enemy's unique approach to writing and recording, and whether there's any life left in Spiritual Beggars.

Five years have passed since you released *Will to Power*. Were you itching to put out a new record?
Absolutely. This has always been my passion. It used to be a hobby and then it became a career, so I'm really lucky. But I've always really enjoyed making new music, whatever I'm working on.

Were there any challenges you faced in creating the songs for *Deceivers*?
The only time it's a little bit daunting is in the very beginning when I have no ideas and it's just like I'm staring at a blank piece of paper. But then before you know it, you have half a song together. Soon after, you have two or three songs. And then you've done six or seven and you think, "Okay, shit, we're halfway there." And you keep on going.

What effect did the pandemic have on Arch Enemy?
We were not so badly affected. We ended our tour for *Will to Power* on December 15, 2019, and we always planned to take a year off and write an album, so we were not going to play any shows during that time anyway. I guess we got away easy in the beginning. Then, of course, moving into 2021, it became more of a problem for everybody.

You and drummer Daniel Erlandsson started working on new songs in January 2020. Did you finish writing the album before Covid shut down the music business?
We accumulated a bunch of riffs and fragments of songs, and over the beginning of the year we put most of the songs together before we got stuck in Sweden. But Sweden didn't have a lockdown the way the rest of the world did, so me and Daniel could still meet up and work on the demos. We did that through the summer and then we got over to Denmark and recorded the drums. Then, of course, I did my guitars, and we did the bass and vocals.

Why didn't Jeff Loomis join you in the studio to record his parts?
We tried to get him over. We had the correct paperwork, and everyone was tested, but Jeff was not allowed to board the plane. We booked three different flights for him, but it was at a time when everything was shut down and they wouldn't let him fly to Denmark.

Did you and Jeff send files back and forth or work over the internet?
I sent him the parts where I wanted him to record a solo, and then we worked remotely on them. I prefer to record face to face, of course, because in person you can see exactly what's happening and give immediate feedback based on what you both just experienced in the room. When someone's in America and you're in Sweden and he's uploading solos while you're sleeping and then overnighting them, you don't have that kind of feedback. When we're all together, maybe I get inspired by the last part by something he plays. And I'll go, "Well, fuck it. Why don't you do something at the end of the song as well as an outro. You can just let it fly." That doesn't work as well when you're not both there. We tried and did our best and I think his solos on the record are great, but I missed the vibe of recording together.

You both play solos on the record. How would you compare your styles?
We have very different, contrasting styles, and I've always loved that. It's like in Iron Maiden. I've always liked Adrian Smith's style compared to Dave Murray's. Sure, I like Dave Murray, too, but I enjoyed Adrian's more hard rock, blues style compared to Dave's legato stuff. I always make sure Jeff has a whammy bar to play with, so we have a lot of Floyd Rose dives. I don't do that, but I like to hear it in the music. He's in a category of his own, but it comes more from the Eighties shredders. And then, I have the wah pedal, which fits nicely with my sound because my main influences are the classic hard rock guys like Michael Schenker, Uli Jon Roth, Gary Moore and Frank Marino.

For your rhythms, you draw from classic thrash in addition to Swedish death metal.
I think my main influences rhythmically are thrash people like James Hetfield, Dave Mustaine and Slayer. That's the stuff I grew up on and I love that intensity and that very speedy riffing style. But I also really like Florida death metal guys like Chuck Schuldiner [*Death*] and Trey Azagthoth [*Morbid Angel*]. I'm also influenced by a lot of Judas Priest, Saxon and the other New Wave of British Heavy Metal bands, plus the first few Motörhead records and Accept guitarist Wolf Hoffman. I love a lot of kinds of metal, and I think it all finds its way into the sound of Arch Enemy.

Did Jeff record any of the rhythm tracks on *Deceivers* or is that all you?
I always do them all. I think it works for straight-ahead rock bands to have both guitarists play the rhythms, but this isn't the Rolling Stones. There's not that playful interplay between guitarists. It's more about getting everything really tight. And since I'm writing it, I know exactly how I want it played and sometimes it's hard to teach that to someone else so it's as precise as it needs to be on the album.

Do you write songs one at a time or do you work on multiple pieces simultaneously?
I always find it really easy to start a song, and then it's more difficult to wrap it up. You have to come up with the right middle eight, the solo sections, the outro. That's a lot of stuff that's got to work together. We usually go into the verse, the pre-chorus, and the chorus and that happens quickly. And we often write a bunch of those before we decide what other parts work in the song. It's a very emotional process. It's from-the-heart songwriting. It can't be a methodical or mechanical thing. For me it's got to be instinctive and mean something.

When you hit a creative obstacle, did you ever dip into the riff vault for inspiration?
No, it was all fresh from the ground up on this record. Daniel also writes music so there are always ideas going around. And I never get tired of playing and playing until something strikes me. so there's never a shortage of riffs.

What was the hardest song to play?
In "Sunset Over the Empire," the riff on the verse is a bit demanding. There's a rapid pattern, and you need a bit of stamina to keep that going.

TO WORK WITH POP SINGERS" — MICHAEL AMOTT

Arch Enemy's Michael Amott [*left*] and Jeff Loomis perform in Madrid, October 8, 2022

JAVIER BRAGADO/REDFERNS

Is it ever hard to replicate something onstage that you recorded?
That happens a lot. I write this stuff and then when we're rehearsing for the tour, it's just, "Holy shit. What have I done?" In the studio, I'm sitting down and playing, and it's very comfortable for me. There's no pressure. If I make a mistake, I can start again. But then you've got to pull all that stuff off live in one take and you've got to try to look cool doing it. You can't look lost or flustered.

There are more soaring clean vocals and beautiful melodic passages on *Deceivers* than there were on *Will to Power*. Is there ever a point where you're resistant to toning something down too much, or do you like the way the softer parts contrast with the heavier passages?
I'm very die-hard. I want to keep that metal edge and that heavy vibe, so we don't experiment with electronic beats and samples and we're not going to work with pop singers. We don't hear new bands and get influenced by them to do something more modern. When I formed Arch Enemy in 1995, I knew what I wanted to do. There was always an agenda and we're still on the same path, so the basic formula is the same. The goal now is just to write great songs within the framework of extreme metal and have a lot of melody present, especially in the guitars.

You were in Carcass in 1993 when the band recorded *Heartwork*, which is widely considered a breakthrough in melodic death metal.
I was right there when there was a movement to make death metal more melodic. I'm still proud of what we did on that album and I'm still that simple, stubborn son of a bitch that's happy doing what I do. I like Depeche Mode, but I don't ever want Arch Enemy to sound anything like them. I love Jimmy Page, but I don't want to play like him. I'm pretty happy being me.

When you worked on *Heartwork*, did it feel like you were breaking new ground?
When I was writing "This Mortal Coil" and "Heartwork" with [*Carcass guitarist*] Bill Steer I remember thinking, "Shit, Carcass is such a brutal band. I wonder how people are gonna react to this." I had never heard any death metal that was that melodic before. On *Heartwork*, we had guitars playing all the harmonies. That had never been done before. Now, it's commonplace but somebody had to be the first and I think, maybe, that was one of those very first times when that happened. It was pretty cool to be a part of that. Of course, a lot of people who liked early Carcass couldn't stand that record. They said I ruined the band.

With Arch Enemy back at full tilt, have you and Sharlee considered working on a new Spiritual Beggars album?
No, not really. We did our last record, *Sunrise to Sundown*, in 2016 and right now we have nothing planned. To be honest, it just kind of ran its course. Maybe we haven't officially split up or anything, but I haven't really felt inspired to write anything in that style in a long time.

It sounds like there was a point where you lost interest. Did something happen internally with the band?
I think it has a lot more to do with Arch Enemy. If I can blame anything for the end of Spiritual Beggars, it's probably our busy schedule. Arch Enemy has become a much bigger band than it was before. It takes a lot to keep it going and I can't physically be doing multiple bands anymore. But that's a good thing. I'm not a frustrated guitarist who dreams of doing a solo album so everybody can hear the real me. Because what I do in Arch Enemy is who I am. I get all my energies out with the band. So, this is my real journey. GW

"I LOVE JIMMY PAGE, BUT I DON'T WANT TO PLAY LIKE HIM. I'M PRETTY HAPPY BEING ME"

"AT LONG LAST, I HAVE MY ULTIMATE DUAL ECHO IN A SINGLE PEDAL"

– ANDY TIMMONS

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King Gizzard & the Lizard Wizard's Stu Mackenzie — shown with his trademark 1967 Yamaha Flying Samurai — photographed in Northern California in October 2022

KEYS TO THE KINGDOM

INSIDE THE STRANGE WORLD OF **KING GIZZARD & THE LIZARD WIZARD**, THE MOST ECLECTIC AND PROLIFIC ROCK BAND IN OUR CORNER OF THE UNIVERSE

BY GRANT MOON

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEN ROSENSTEIN

THEY'VE MADE 20 ALBUMS IN 10 YEARS. and they've had three new albums — yes, three — released in late 2022 alone. But there is method in this madness, as King Gizzard & the Lizard Wizard's affable vocalist, co-guitarist and head honcho Stu Mackenzie explains. "There's always a plan when we make an album," he says. "Sometimes it's still being formulated throughout the process, and sometimes it's more of a mission statement, a manifesto. Usually we'll have a couple of songs that have one vibe and some that have another, so we join the ones that have similar themes then write more songs like that. It's like we're creating brothers and sisters for them."

Since their 2012 debut, *12 Bar Bruise*, this Melbourne, Australia-based collective have populated their "Gizzverse" with their own trippy cocktail of garage rock, psych rock, proggy jams, psilocybin-soaked soul, thrash metal and world music. From the thrilling microtonal experiments of 2017's *Flying Microtonal Banana* to the balls-out thrash metal of 2019's *Infest the Rats' Nest*, their catalog shows how compelling and defiantly eclectic they are. And in 2022, they were more prolific than ever before.

April saw the release of their 20th LP, *Omnium Gatherum* — their first double album — which embraced alt-rock, hip-hop, space rock, metal, jazz, soul and more. In October came three albums in quick succession: first, *Ice, Death, Planets, Lungs, Mushrooms and Lava*, then *Laminated Denim*, and finally *Changes*. This vast array of

new material shows the serious musicality beneath their veneer of hip quirk, the band embracing modal jams, polyrhythmic intermission music and some woozy exercises in rapid key modulation. It's unbelievable when listening to it, but *Omnium Gatherum* seems to have been the most straightforward affair.

"We didn't intend to make a double," Mackenzie says. "We just had heaps of songs. That one felt less focused than other releases, but on purpose. We didn't go in with an overarching concept and that felt nice. It was just about each song really being its own little thing, and that was liberating. We could take some different paths we usually wouldn't go down, approach ideas that felt daunting or unrealistic to do for a whole record, and just try some things out."

Things like hip-hop. The spacey, Sixties-psych jazz of "Kepler 22-b" is powered by an irresistible breakbeat pulse, and "The Grim Reaper" and "Sadie Sorceress" saw the band channeling Beastie Boys-style rap smarts. Those tunes were also unconventionally written — the blueprints were based on chopped-up samples from Mackenzie's bargain-bin world-music LPs, and those ideas were then expanded on by the band, completed by co-guitarists/vocalists Cook Craig and Joey Walker, Ambrose Kenny-Smith (keys), Lucas Harwood (bass) and Michael Cavanagh on drums.

There are proggy/jazzy moments ("Evilest Man") and catchy, retro tunes ("Blame It on the Weather"), along with some heavy stuff. Mackenzie reaches for his Gibson Holy Explorer on the Iron Maiden-esque "Gaia" — which gallops along in proggy sub-divisions of $\frac{9}{8}$ meter, and the Judas Priest-like "Predator X," one of the album's unabashed metal moments.

A leftover from last year's *Butterfly 3000* LP, the funky, eastern-flavored "Magenta Mountain" has a beautiful riff whose lines shift from a major to minor pentatonic feel, the song opening in F♯ then gravitating toward its relative minor, D♯ minor. "I have grown to love pentatonics," Mackenzie says. "There's something about it which is just so inherently melodic, and so much music is built around that scale. The trick with it is to try to make something that still feels unique, original and fresh."

The album's relentless opener, "Dripping Tap," features some drop-D, Mixolydian guitar madness set to an irresistible motorik beat (complete with wailing harmonica), and such modal experimentation forms the backbone of the first of their three new releases...

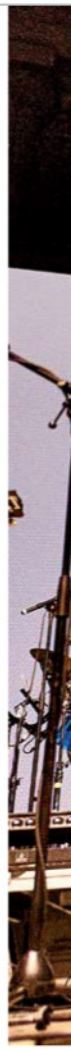
ICE, DEATH, PLANETS, LUNGS, MUSHROOMS AND LAVA takes its title from the band's mnemonic for the order of the seven modes of the major scale: Ionian, Dorian, Phrygian, Lydian, Mixolydian, Aeolian and Locrian. Convening at Gizz HQ — their large rehearsal space on the outskirts of Melbourne — they would spend one day jamming on each individual mode, then go back through the five or six hours of recorded music and sift it for the most interesting moments, then arrange. "The concept there was to not prepare anything," Mackenzie says, "to just roll tape and capture everything. We record the main tracks, a day per song, but there's a lot of content in there. We went back through all the recordings, which took an absurd amount of time, energy and patience, and grabbed all the parts that had a vibe, that didn't sound like anything we'd ever done before."

With sax and organ, the gentle, almost Caribbean "Mycelium" is their Ionian moment, an easy vamp on E♭ to Fm — the mode's first two chords in the key of E♭. But perhaps typically for such an unorthodox group, the major scale wasn't King Gizzard's starting point. "We attacked the modes in the order we felt comfy with them," Mackenzie says. "We started with [*the funky single*] 'Ice V,' which uses the Dorian mode, then went Mixolydian [*the catchy 13-minuter 'Hell's Itch'*], Phrygian [*the jazzy 'Magma'*], the straight minor [*or Aeolian, on the wah-packed, flute-flecked 'Iron Lung'*], then Ionian for 'Mycelium'."

Which leaves many guitarists' favorite mode, the Lydian, and the frequently neglected Locrian, whose ♭2, ♭3, ♭5, ♭6 and ♭7 offer little in the way of conventional, consonant tonality. "Locrian was easily the hardest," Mackenzie says. "We were nervous about it so we left it last! It's easy to play Locrian and sound dissonant, but I wanted us to sound deliberate and melodic, but maintain the loose, freewheeling feeling of the jam it came from. We'd done all these other jams beforehand, so once we got into a groove and a pattern, that one, which we called Gliese 710, kind of clicked."

The Lydian piece, "Lava," comes with flute, sax and wah'd guitar, giving that brightest of all modes a woozy, hypnotic, psychedelic feel. "That was hard for us," he says. "We tend to sit on the tonic — the I [one] — and explore it, but Lydian has that ♯4, which means it's inherently floating outside of its tonic — it doesn't want you to sit on the I. A lot of our music is muscular and strong and powerful, and Lydian is none of those things. It's like a cloud, like air — unsolid. Funnily enough, the straight-up major scale/Ionian was quite challenging as well. It was about finding something that didn't feel too happy, too Disney."

With a piano, drumkit and an assortment of spanking new and knackered old synths also in the room, King Gizzard's three guitarists would share their instruments — Mackenzie's trademark 1967 Yamaha Flying Samurai, Walker's Gibson SG, Craig's Fender Jazzmaster. Mackenzie went through his sole amp, a Fender Hot Rod Deluxe, using its dirty channel, and his go-to fuzz, an old Devi Ever Torn's Peaker.



THE FOLLOWING ALBUM, LAMINATED DENIM, was made as an intermediate step between *Omnium Gatherum* and *Ice, Death's* modal explorations. In 2020 the band were meant to play at the iconic Red Rocks Amphitheatre in Colorado. Two 15-minute intermissions were built into their mammoth, three-hour performance, so they had produced two pieces of music to play during those breaks as a clock ticked down — at its natural 60 bpm — on the stage's screen. Due to the pandemic, the Red Rocks show was pushed back to this past October, and, being who they are, the band couldn't resist making two new tracks for the same purpose. "The Land Before Time" and "Hypertension" are motorik, guitar-heavy frenzies and masterclasses in how powerful repetition in music can be.

"We actually started *Laminated Denim* before *Ice, Death*," Mackenzie says, "but they were recorded in a similar fashion. It was entirely improvised. We had a click track in our ears because there'll be a clock ticking down on the screen, and both songs are a polyrhythm to that — I think one might be 150 and 180 — they work with the 60 bpm, so the clock becomes a polyrhythm to the tempo of the tracks. Guitar-wise, we stripped things back a lot — I'm playing the Yamaha with my Cry Baby Wah and a fuzz. Cook's on his Jazzmaster, Joe's on his SG."

The Red Rocks show is part of the second U.S. leg of the band's extensive world tour this year. Live, Mackenzie keeps just three guitars on stage — his Flying Samurai, which he keeps in standard or drop-D tuning, his custom Gibson Holy Explorer, tuned to C♯ standard [*C♯, F♯, B, E, G♯, C♯ — great for metal*], and his Flying Banana guitar for the microtonal songs. Attached to his guitar by his Divine Noise Curly Cable, his live pedalboard is pretty sparse — the Torn's Peaker fuzz, Cry Baby, JHS Superbolt overdrive, Boss DD-3 Distortion and a Boss TU-3 tuner. Craig has two Jazzmasters, one in standard, one in C♯ standard,

while Craig's SG shares a stand with a Flying V, and his own microtonal guitar.

But the guitar is only one strand in King Gizzard's musical fabric. Their fourth and final 2022 album, *Changes*, came about from Mackenzie's piano noodlings, which leads him to very useful tip for budding composers: "I'm a big believer in writing on an instrument you don't feel comfortable on. I love guitar — it's far and away the instrument I feel the most comfy on, and I'll always play it. But unless you try very hard not to, you can get stuck in certain ruts, playing the same shapes or patterns. There's nothing wrong with that, as long as you're aware of it, but that's why I love writing on piano. The separation of lines between your two hands means you can sketch out parts for three people — one playing chords, one playing bass and one playing a melody. Then you can give this rough idea to three players who can flesh out their parts."

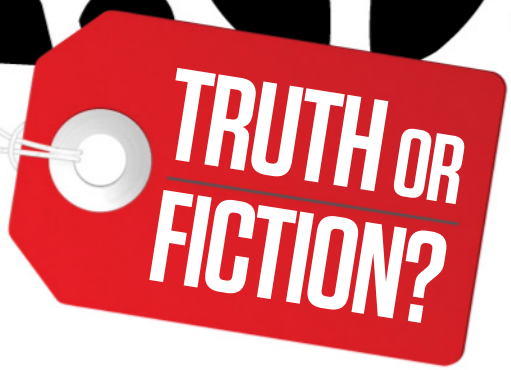
All seven tracks on *Changes* are predicated on an idea Mackenzie came up with, on piano, of modulating quickly between the keys of D major and F♯ major, and exploring the fresh, surprising tonal possibilities this unusual marriage of keys brings. From the cycling A/B chords of the playful title track to the spacey "Astroturf," from the bluesy "No Body" (some great, spare lead playing in here) to the motorik "Gondii," the band make this pleasingly muso exercise a highly listenable one.

"Those two scales are so different," he says. "They contain very few of the same notes. I wanted to make it sound pretty, beautiful and not too melodically weird. I'd just never heard anyone do this before. I'm sure there are jazz records like this, but this doesn't feel like jazz. The challenge was to make it not sound like jazz to the listener. It's just a weird experiment, a study. When we first had the idea back in 2017 we tried to make a record out of it but couldn't. Everything we did was unlistenable! I'd be looking at my guitar neck and be like, 'F*ck, what scale am I in?!' But there was something catchy about it, and every time I'd sit in front of any keyboard I would oscillate between those two scales, and every now and then land on something pretty. It took five years of tinkering in the background, but slowly it came together. My favorite records that we've made as a band have always been ones I felt we couldn't have made a few years ago. They feel like progressions or signposts along the road."

King Gizzard & the Lizard Wizard in action in October. "I have grown to love pentatonics," Stu Mackenzie says. "There's something about it which is just so inherently melodic"

And even over these past five years, King Gizzard have come far. It's how they've been able to come up with four compelling, extraordinary albums on the bounce in a single year. Stu Mackenzie reckons they've developed as players together, and — crucially — they're listening to what each other are doing better than ever before. "We jam for a little bit," he says, "so you're conversing in a certain way, musically. And if you're talking all day, by the end you've said some fairly interesting things..." GW

G.A.S.



IS GEAR ACQUISITION SYNDROME A REAL AFFLICTION OR A FICTITIOUS AILMENT COINED TO JUSTIFY THE URGE TO SPLURGE?

GW CHECKS IN WITH EXPERTS AND SELF-PROCLAIMED GEAR ADDICTS TO FIND OUT IF G.A.S. EXISTS OR IS SIMPLY A FIGMENT OF OUR IMAGINATION

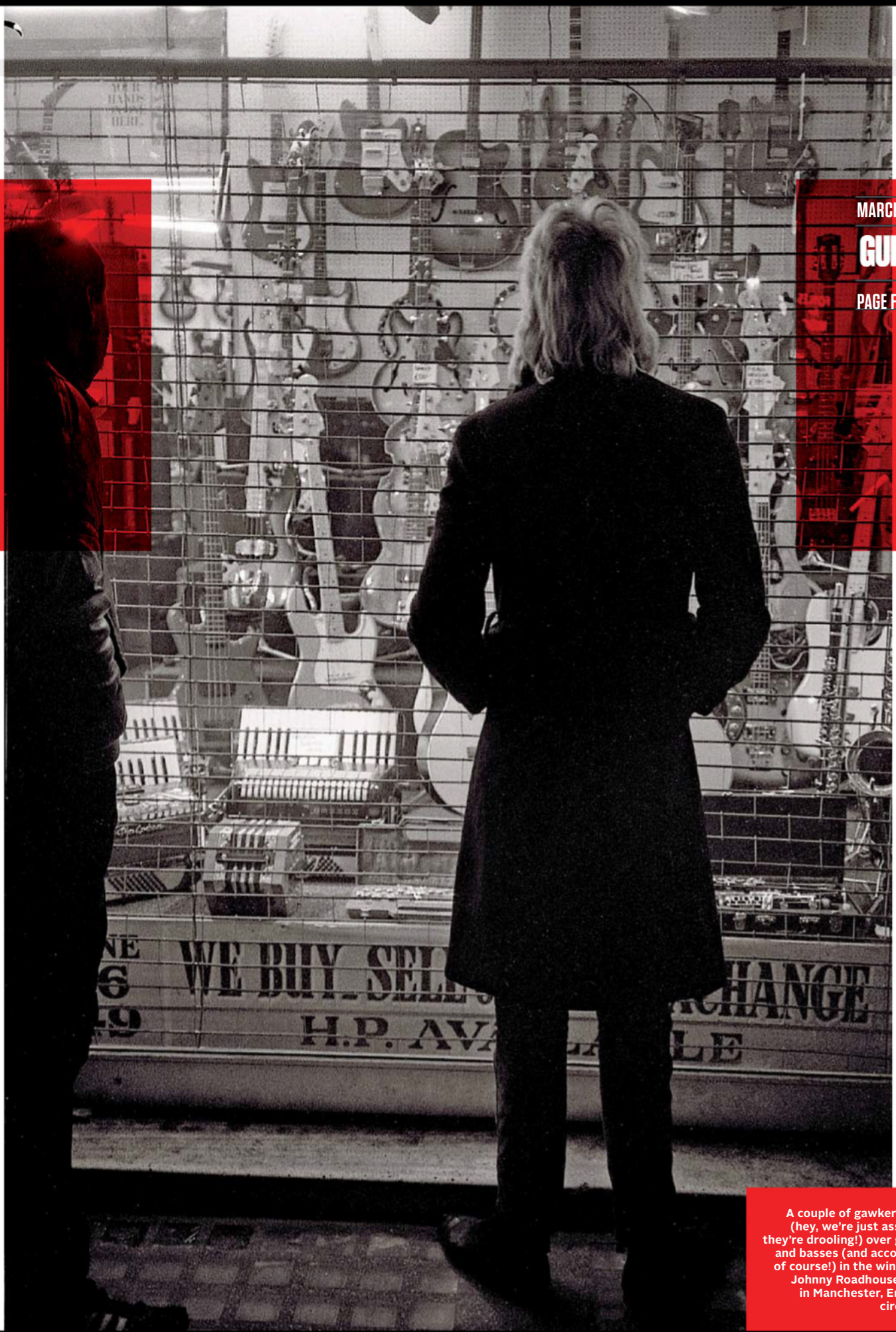
By Pauline France

GEAR ACQUISITION SYNDROME — or G.A.S. for short — is a term that describes the seemingly uncontrollable impulse to buy — you guessed it — gear.

It's that insatiable rush that invades every cell in your being, convincing you that you need to buy that guitar. That you need to buy that pedal, or if you've got the real estate to back it up, the half stacks, full stacks and all the amplifiers and combos you can get your hands on.

But why? How did this start? And what triggers it? Is it a bad thing? Is it a good thing? And is it even a "thing" at all?

We did some research to clear the air and dispel the myths surrounding this fascinating phenomenon plaguing seasoned guitarists and unsuspecting newbies alike.



MARTIN O'NEILL/REDFERNS

A couple of gawkers drool (hey, we're just assuming they're drooling!) over guitars and basses (and accordians, of course!) in the window of Johnny Roadhouse Music in Manchester, England, circa 1981

AND THEN THERE WAS G.A.S.

ORIGINALLY CALLED *GUITAR* acquisition syndrome, its origins trace back to Steely Dan guitarist Walter Becker, who introduced the term in a 1996 *Guitar Player* magazine article titled "G.A.S.," humorously urging guitarists to become aware of its existence, and the case-queen compound or fuzz-pedal fort one will inevitably find themselves surrounded by (or buried under, depending on the severity) if not addressed.

"Guitar Acquisition Syndrome. You undoubtedly know someone who has it. Reading this rag, you probably have it yourself. Or will have it someday soon or would like to have it. You may think it's cool. But it's not cool. Not anymore. How many Strats do you need to be happy? How many Strat copies, each extensively modified to be able to produce the variations in tone that once would have required maybe four different guitars? How many knobs and switches does that Strat need?" Becker wrote.

As other non-guitar-playing musicians experiencing the same impulses caught wind of guitar acquisition syndrome, and as guitarists realized that the extent of their urge went beyond the guitar itself, the term evolved to be more inclusive, turning into *gear* acquisition syndrome, opening the joyous floodgates to all things guitar- and musical-instrument related — whether that be basses, interfaces, pedals, amps, etc.

THE PROPERTIES OF G.A.S.

HOW DOES ONE know if he or she has G.A.S.? And is it something you suffer from, or something to embrace?

Similar to the actual gaseous state of matter, G.A.S. starts off invisible and can completely fill up all the accessible space made available to it; it creeps up on you moving at an extremely fast pace; and it's compressible and expandable. But thankfully, to our salvation, it's not deadly, and it doesn't smell... but it can *attack* you.

In his comical and tongue-in-cheek book *GAS! Living with Guitar Acquisition Syndrome*, author Jay Wright compiles confessions from hundreds of *gassers* (a word we made up to refer to those of us with G.A.S.) around the world. One of them describes a G.A.S. attack in detail.

"G.A.S. can strike you at any time, but onset normally occurs upon seeing, hearing or touching a particular ax. The attack itself can range from mild to severe. Your eyes open wider as the pupils dilate; your breathing becomes more noticeable as your heart rate increases. You drool, you stare, you drool some more... Your mind races as you imagine the rest of your life with this baby in it — how much more skilled, happy and fulfilled you would be. Then you begin to imagine how incomplete and unfulfilled the rest of your life would be without it. A battle erupts inside you: heart vs. head. You're faced with two immediate problems: 1) how to find relief from this powerful force, and 2) how to manage a transfer of ownership. That, my friend, is a G.A.S. attack."

Steely Dan's Walter Becker performs in Brussels in 1996

"GUITAR ACQUISITION SYNDROME. YOU UNDOUBTEDLY KNOW SOMEONE WHO HAS IT. READING THIS RAG, YOU PROBABLY HAVE IT YOURSELF. OR WILL HAVE IT SOMEDAY SOON OR WOULD LIKE TO HAVE IT" — Walter Becker (1996)

As self-proclaimed gassers, we can attest to the veracity of such attacks, becoming enraptured at the sight of a guitar — let alone hundreds. We have experienced walking into a music store and becoming entranced, feeling breathless, overly stimulated and admittedly, salivating. Yes, the drool is real, and it is also involuntary.

Other symptoms we've experienced range from restless bouts of excitable anticipation to predatory-like pursuits of the desired possession. The euphoria culminates only with the explosive yet serene comfort brought forth the moment you receive and hold your prized object... only for the quest to start all over again once you discover your next prey.

If you nodded in agreement to the aforementioned symptoms; congratulations — you passed G.A.S. It's a sport. You win some, you lose some. But if not managed properly, can you lose yourself in the process, too?

And the question remains... is this a real phenomenon, or a playful acronym the tight-knit gear community uses to conceal our indulgent spending habits?

HERE COMES THE TRIGGER YOUR G.A.S. JUST GOT BIGGER

ONE OF THE greatest underlying questions when researching G.A.S. is, what sets it off? What triggers the notion that you must have that new piece of gear when you already have one — or 100?

San Diego-based Jan Hoeglund, a 39-year-old guitarist and owner of Audio Imperia, said his trigger stems from a deep-seated emotional connection coupled with the satisfaction he receives from the pursuit of the instrument at hand.

"I collect from the guitarists that shaped my playing as I was progressing from my journey," Hoeglund says. "I always ask myself what an instrument means to me personally versus how much it's worth. And there's the element of the hunt for incredibly hard-to-find guitars. Finding and purchasing them is extraordinarily satisfying."

Hoeglund added that his G.A.S. is particularly triggered by certain artist signature models — a collecting approach inspired by his first time listening to Slash.

"I have an emotional connection with singlecut Les Paul guitars because I was obsessed with Slash when I listened to him as a child, so my first electric guitar had to be a Les Paul," Hoeglund says. "Seeing those models took me back to that precise moment in time when I first heard Slash."

The emotional bond is a common motive for those amassing gear, but 65-year-old Murrieta, California-based collector Mark Nalley says his purchases also have to be financially sound.

"My guitar collection has got sentimental value to it because I'm emotionally connected to it, but it's also like having money in the bank," Nalley says. "Emotions are a trigger, but the finances of it are really pinnacle. You can be emotional about whatever you want, but you have to separate emotion if the financial investment doesn't make sense."

For Jethro Odom, a 53-year-old guitarist and healthcare executive in Seattle, his trigger is attributed to the endless permutations in the quest for tone.

"I have to know what something sounds like with different pickup combinations," Odom says. "And then I have to know what it'll sound like with a particular amp. You over-intellectualize things to maybe give yourself the excuse to buy it."

He also discussed how the friendly G.A.S.-perpetuating gear community contributes to supporting his endeavors.

BECKER: GIE KNAEPS/GETTY IMAGES PEDALS GALORE: FUTURE

"There's a whole aspect of being online with people who are passionate about a sub-genre of gear," Odom says. "And then you get caught up in it, stuck in the minutiae of tubes, amps, tone, thinking you'll sound just like Albert Lee if you make that tweak. You can always convince yourself, but usually, I think it's a pursuit of knowledge and tone."

FILLING A VOID OR FUELING OUR CREATIVITY

ANYONE WITH G.A.S. has or will inevitably be faced with the daunting question, "But *why* do you need another one if you've already got plenty of them?" coming — usually — from a significant other or from anyone attempting to dwell in the same abode as you and your extended guitar family.

You may have even been accused of having a problem or an addiction. But if G.A.S. does in fact exist, do we resort to it to fill a void, or to ignite our creative pursuits?

Dr. Joel J. Heidelbaugh, an avid guitarist, medical doctor and clinical professor at the Departments of Family Medicine and Urology at the University of Michigan Medical School in Ann Arbor, offers an optimistic outlook.

"If you're like me, you're trying to fill your house," Heidelbaugh says with a laugh. "Guitarists are usually trying to fill the need for diversity and fill the need for different styles, different tones, different elements. If you were to ask somebody what their favorite band is, very few people are going to give you one answer; they're going to give you multiple answers. To put it in context for non-musicians, nobody is going to get away with just sneakers or just dress shoes. And more than filling a void, I believe it's trying to fill a *desire* for an element of completeness in a passion that you're following, and that passion is music. The greatest thing about G.A.S. is that it can spawn creativity for people and keep them loving music. I'm a firm believer that music can enrich your life, and I also think it's a great health benefit."

Dr. T.M. Robinson-Mosley, a sport mental health expert and counseling psychologist based out of Atlanta, said G.A.S. leans toward the positive if it's purpose-focused.

"Being able to engage in practices connected to music is very powerful because they can be driven by passion, purpose and community," Mosley says. "This is an area where music and sports are similar in that you see people coming together. But if you are engaging in something that pulls you away from community, or pulls you away from being able to really enjoy the beauty that comes from this creative endeavor, then you kind of defeat the purpose of why you're having G.A.S. in the first place."

A METHOD TO YOUR G.A.S.NESS

HOW DO YOU go about it? Is it collecting? Is it G.A.S.? Is it hoarding? Or is it all three? Oh my.

In their 2021 book *Gear Acquisition Syndrome: Consumption of Instruments and Technology in Popular Music*, authors Jan-Peter Herbst and Jonas Menze elucidate on the notion of collecting versus *gassing*. They explain that there is overlap between collecting and gassing, but that one is more methodical than the other.

"G.A.S. has compulsive features, while collecting has a rational and strategic side, whether for the sake of social capital, cultural heritage or transcendence. However, collectors' emotional reactions and motivations make it problematic to consider the spectrum of rationality as the main distinguishing factor between G.A.S. and collecting. Both exhibit additional commonalities that show in information-seeking activities, excitement in the 'hunt,' flow states and sat-

isfaction and relief in the event of success," Herbst and Menze say.

Josh Scott, Kansas City, Missouri-based owner and creator of JHS Pedals and host of *The JHS Show* on YouTube, has a jaw-dropping collection exceeding 5,000 pedals, independent from his company's inventory. His collection is so cosmic, it is now a museum in the making.

He recalled the moment he realized he became a collector, at one point humorously questioning if he was hoarder. He's far from it, but how did he make that distinction?

"My assistant Katrina kept putting shelves on the wall, and the shelving kept growing, and growing, and growing. And I'd say, 'Oh, we're done.' And then I'd say, 'I need a few more.' And it became a joke. It never ended," Scott says. "Once the room reached shelving from floor to ceiling, 360 degrees, I asked Katrina if she thought I was hoarding, but she said, 'No, you're too organized. You're a collector.'"

Because Scott is a passionate storyteller fueled by sharing his gift and knowledge with others, we, too, agree he does *not* fall under the category of hoarder, but rather a connoisseur, collector and curator heavily invested in documenting guitar history and the artifacts that go with it.

"I'm a historian in the study of the evolution of electronics of guitar, so my goal is to own every piece of development," Scott says. "My approach is similar to a library or museum."

So how to know if you're teetering between G.A.S. or hoarding?

"With hoarding there is typically an intense attachment to an object because it is often rooted in trauma," Mosley says. "It usually stems from something catastrophic that has happened, and parting with objects is extremely painful and difficult."

In *Gear Acquisition Syndrome: Consumption of Instruments and Technology in Popular Music,* authors Herbst and Menze cite Peter Subkowski's 2006 book *On the Psychodynamics of Collecting*, explaining the difference.

"Collecting, by contrast, is defined as a methodical pursuit with an attempt at completion and an above-average interest in a topic, which is accompanied by the reading of literature and other information-seeking activities, and it is carried out passionately and becoming persistent over time (Subkowski 2006)."

G.A.S. TOO SHALL PASS

WHILE IT APPEARS there is no cure for this fascinating phenomenon (nor do we wish to eradicate it), there are certainly ways to mitigate and perfect it.

If you suspect you do have G.A.S., seasoned gassers recommend setting parameters to prevent a potentially dangerous leak. What those strategies are can only be decided by you, based on your interests and income.

Hoeglund suggests you earn before you burn — and to develop a system.

"G.A.S. was only a problem when I didn't have the money, but never to the point where it got in the way of my obligations," he said. "If you buy it, you should be able to afford it at least twice. My focus is that I am a completionist. I collect three of each guitar I buy — one to keep, one to potentially sell and another to potentially trade."

For Odom, his niche is Fender's high-gain amps. Nalley, who owns many of Eddie Van Halen's personal and coveted guitars, forgoes manufactured memorabilia and only focuses on high-value guitars that were owned and played by guitarists he has an emotional tie to.

Brett Coleman, a 52-year-old guitar player and oil industry executive in Houston, with a collection of more than 300 guitars, is passionate about shredder-era guitar music, and his impressive collection reflects that. He suggests you identify your passion, and G.A.S. accordingly.

"Figure out your lane. If you're all about vintage gear, learn as much as you can about vintage instruments. If you want to be a shred collector, then learn as much as you can about that era," Coleman says. "Don't buy one or two of these, and one or two of those, because then you'll be all over the place."

As to how to prevent a leak, Coleman says to keep your priorities in check and to not rack up your debt.

"Take care of your family first. Don't sacrifice the light bill or your kid's Little League," Coleman says**.** "Also, don't charge up your credit cards; otherwise you'll become what I call a credit card collector."

To mitigate G.A.S., Mosley provides a handy acronym to put under your belt at the onset of symptoms.

"When you talk about triggers, it's good for people to be aware of H.A.L.T. and identify when they are Hungry, Angry or Anxious, Lonely or Tired," Mosley says. "Those spaces can often trigger folks to compulsively buy things to binge on, and we become especially vulnerable."

WHEN THINGS GET G.A.S.TRONOMICAL

HOW MUCH IS too many? Is your collection so vast that your spiritual flagpole is at half-mast? Is your collection guilt- or nausea-inducing instead of pleasure producing? Or do you relish in walking down memory lane as you proudly stare at your hard-earned collection?

Proverbial memes say if you know how many guitars you have, you don't have enough. Coleman says the right number is a pair and a spare, and more technical opinions say the equation is n+1, with n being the number of guitars you currently possess, meaning your quest is always infinite and your G.A.S. is ever-expanding (did we not say earlier that it expands and contracts?).

We found out, however, that the answer is that only *you* can determine what the magic number is. There is no one size to fit all. There's only what works for you and those impacted by your disposition for gear acquisition, if any.

If you believe your urge is out of balance, though, Mosley provides another handy acronym.

"When we think about whether something is becoming a problem, it's more than just the actual behavior, it's what's impacted by the behavior," Mosley says. "The acronym I pull from is F.I.T., which stands for Frequency, Intensity and Time. Are you noticing the frequency increasing, buying gear every day, every week or every month? Are your urges more intense, where you can't shake them off and you must scratch that itch? Is this happening for extended periods? It's important to remember this isn't happening in a vacuum, so if G.A.S. moves into a place that is unhelpful or unhealthy, you might want to assess."

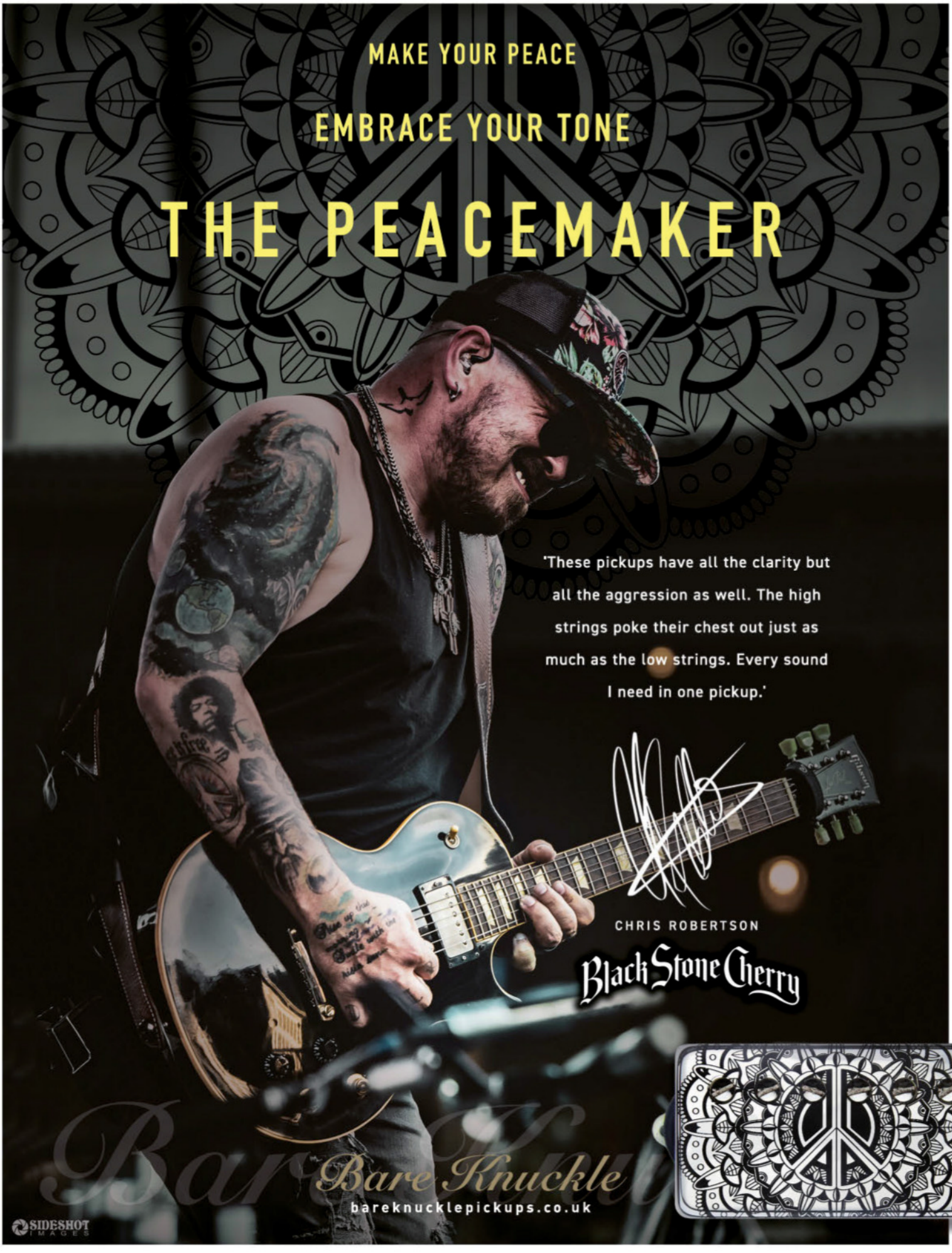
SO G.A.S. - MYTH OR FACT

OUR CONCLUSION IS that G.A.S. is an indisputable fact, and it is only something to reflect on if your impulses leave you in absolute shambles or financial ruins, in complete isolation, and if you are severely neglecting other aspects of your life that leave you desolate, destitute and in a state of starvation, whether physical or spiritual.

Otherwise, who are we to judge? We are fellow proud gassers. If in balance, G.A.S. is a state of sheer bliss in the pursuit of tonal pleasure that manifests in the tangible world in the shape of a guitar, a pedal, an amp or whatever music-making muse sparks your fire.

The G in G.A.S. stands for gear — not guilt. So go forth, G.A.S. responsibly in the name of music. Because it's not something you suffer from when you enjoy it, right?

The information in this article is not intended or implied to be a substitute for medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. If you suspect you have G.A.S., visit your nearest music shop or favorite gear site for immediate assistance. GW


MAKE YOUR PEACE
EMBRACE YOUR TONE
THE PEACEMAKER
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[*from left*] Mercyful Fate's Bjarne T. Holm, Hank Shermann, King Diamond, Mike Wead and Joey Vera

That Old Black Magic

MERCYFUL FATE, THE G.O.A.T.S OF OCCULT METAL, TAKE STOCK OF 40 YEARS OF HELLISH RIFFERY, THEIR STRAT-FUELED SOUND AND WHY THERE'S NO BETTER TIME THAN THE PRESENT FOR US TO COME TO THE SABBATH

BY GREGORY ADAMS

PHOTO BY SYLWIA MAKRIS

WHETHER PLAYING TO packed U.S. clubs or to tens of thousands of metalheads at Germany's Wacken Open Air festival, there's been nothing but love shown to Mercyful Fate since the Danish metal legends emerged from a 23-year live hiatus last summer. Back in the Satanic Panic era of the 1980s, though, the quintet's mix of occult themes and menacing riff-play was just as likely to make fans of horns-raising youth as it was to meet with the pearls-clutching consternation of parents' groups and clergymen, who worried the band were nudging kids ever closer to the Dark Lord.

Formed in 1981 by the famously falsetto-voiced-and-corpse-painted King Diamond and guitarist Hank Shermann, Mercyful Fate re-envisioned Seventies-period Purple-and-Priest with a demonic fervor. Shermann and then co-guitarist Michael Denner ran hellfire scale-climbs through early bangers like "Evil" (from 1983's *Melissa*), but also brought brutish prog intensity to pieces like "Come to the Sabbath" — a gothic epic off 1984's *Don't Break the Oath* full of quick-pivoting time changes, speed metal chunkiness and a finale where King, naturally, pledges eternal devotion to his "Sweet Satan." Both their music and iconography were foundational for the first wave of black metal; in the Nineties, good friends Metallica brought the blackest Mercy bits to the masses with *Garage Inc.*'s 12-minute "Mercyful Fate" medley.

Famously, the band were also listed as one of the "Filthy Fifteen" by the Parents Music Resource Center in a 1985 U.S. senate hearing, their "Into the Coven" cited as a step-by-step guide to bonding yourself with the devil — this among a catalog of similarly blasphemous rites like "Desecration of Souls" and "Satan's Fall." Ironically, being labeled obscene in the hearing alongside big-timers like Prince and Madonna raised the band's profile in the long run.

Though Mercyful Fate first broke up in 1984 (they'd reunite for a run of albums in the 1990s), their legacy escaped unscathed by the moral panic of the PMRC. In another era, though, their musical blaspheming might have faced grave consequences. It's a theme hinted at in "The Jackal of Salzburg," a piece the band premiered live in Hanover, Germany, last June — marking the first new material from Mercyful Fate this century. The song — which ebbs and flows between slow-mo metal gloom, clean-channel eeriness and Shermann's malevolent vibrato — is inspired by real-life witch trials that took place in Salzburg, Austria, between 1675 and 1690, and the more than 130 people executed for supposedly living profane, perverted and possessed existences.

"It's so grotesque, man," the King reveals of the source material, adding that he only just recently learned of the church-and-state-driven massacre. "There was a young man, 20 years old, whose mother was burned alive as a witch in 1675. Two years later they started hunting [*the son*] based on confessions the mom had made under torture, where she gave up her son as being in league with the devil."

They never found the Jackal, a man whom local lore insisted turned into a lycanthropic beast to terrorize the community at night; they did, however, murder a number of street children said to have been in his employ — many burned alive, maimed and tortured at Salzburg's Moosham Castle in the name of "justice." "It's pretty shocking when you think about spearing a child on this horrible thing that goes up your backend and comes out through your mouth, or on a wheel that would pull them apart," King Diamond adds, "Completely insane!"

As legends are wont to do, Mercyful Fate's "The Jackal of Salzburg" grew in scope over the summer as the band — comprising Shermann, King Diamond, guitarist Mike Wead, Armored Saint bassist Joey Vera and drummer Bjarne T. Holm — tweaked the arrangement on stage each night. The song now sits above the nine-minute mark, and it's due to be a part of the band's next album — their first since 1999's *9*. While details are in flux, Shermann and King Diamond cautiously note with *Guitar World* that the next single will be more of a thunderous metal ripper; a ballad exists amidst the new tunes, too. It's a prolific time for the musicians, with King Diamond's equally iconic and eponymous group — which has featured Wead on guitar alongside Swedish shredder Andy LaRocque since 1999 — also plotting their return with a two-part album titled *The Institute*. It's expected to arrive ahead of the Mercyful Fate album.

For Wead, the return of Mercyful Fate is a chance to tap into the old black magic again, after abruptly halting the momentum at the dawn of the century to focus solely on King Diamond.

"I was still working together with King, even if it was as King Diamond instead of Mercyful Fate, but throughout the years I wanted to see Mercy get back together again," Wead says. "We were really close; we also had lots of fun on the road. Of course, I was just waiting for the right time for it to happen."

All this is to say, Mercyful Fate are finally back in fine, frightening form. While they delivered Grand Guignol morbidity to crowds in the early Eighties — King's minimic stand legitimately comprised a human femur and tibia — the group's current stage aesthetic

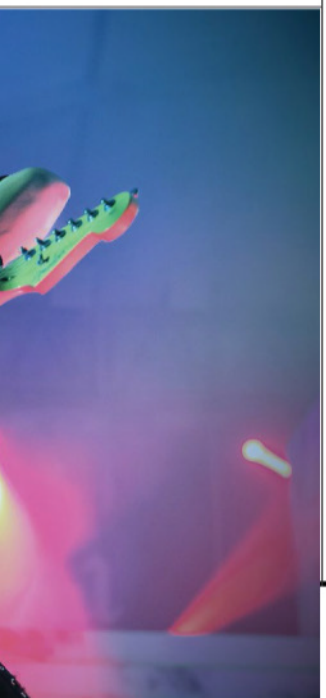
"ARE WE GOING TO DO MERCYFUL FATE AGAIN? I'VE NEVER SAID NEVER — THE DAY THE STARS ALIGN PROPERLY, ABSOLUTELY"
— KING DIAMOND

"I'm trying to respect Michael Denner's guitar playing," Mike Wead says. "Even if we're not the exact same style, I'm trying to stay in the same region"

"It's really tough to try and copy the recorded solos," Hank Shermann says. "I try to keep the highlights"

"THIS IS LIKE MY BABY; IT'S KING'S BABY. WE STARTED ON THE FIRST OF APRIL 1981"

— HANK SHERMANN



adds a beastly, eyes-aglow goat's head mounted onto a pentagram behind Holm; an impressively ominous upside-down cross hangs high above the band. And with its exquisitely coiled horns, King's new mask has him looking extra devilish these days.

Across three separate Zoom calls with Shermann, Wead and King Diamond, the G.O.A.T.s of occult metal take stock of 40 years of hellish riffery; their Strats-only sound; and why there's no better time than the present for us to come to the sabbath.

How did you come to decide it was time to bring Mercyful Fate back, full-force?

HANK SHERMANN: It's something King and I have talked about over the years — we talk frequently [*about*] Mercyful Fate business, whether it's merchandise, royalties or any other thing. I think the idea came to surface in 2012, but he had to do something with his band; later I launched the Denner/Shermann band. In 2018, we got hooked back on the idea, where King was ready and I was ready. It was officially announced [*in*] 2019, so it's been a thing we have been discussing for, let's say 10 years, off and on. And now the time just feels right for it.

In the leadup to these dates, King, you'd mentioned this wasn't a reunion, but rather a continuation of Mercyful Fate. What's the distinction there for you?

KING DIAMOND: Well, it's practically the same lineup as the one we were playing with in 1999. We wished to have [*founding bassist*] Timi Hansen back, but he got sick *[ed. Hansen passed away in 2019 after a battle with cancer]*. He got better for a while, but then he got sick again. It didn't work in the end, but he was fortunately part of selecting Joey as a replacement. It was nice for Joey, as well, to have the opportunity to meet Timi. It was good vibes [*despite*] what happened.

What did it mean for the band to bond and reconnect with Timi before he passed?

KING: Timi had been there for a long time. He had a very unique style, playing with his fingers — a unique growl that one can hear in those early albums. So, that finger style became quite important to us, since we were playing these old songs. Timi already knew everything about Joey before I even mentioned [*him as a replacement*]. I went down and saw Joey play with Fates Warning, and it was amazing to hear the tone he has. Different... but so very close to what it sounded like. It's been very easy for us to incorporate Joey into all the old stuff. He was all about honoring Timi. Joey is a permanent member in Fate now.

MIKE WEAD: He treats it with lots of respect, you know. Even though I'm pretty sure he doesn't play every note like Timi did, Timi never did that either. That was Timi's thing — he was very in the moment as a bass player. In my opinion, that was one of his strengths. In any case, Joey is really doing exceptional with Mercy. I'm really happy to be stage-right with him; [*it's*] our little home.

What does the return of Mercyful Fate mean to you, creatively or personally?

SHERMANN: This is like my baby; it's King's baby. We started Mercyful Fate on the first of April 1981. We were in another band just before called Brats [*ed. a punky, late-Seventies group from Copenhagen that at various points also featured Hansen on bass and Denner on guitar*]. We soon after split from that band and became fast-focused on different types of music — let's say more Judas Priest, Uriah Heap and Sabbath-inspired stuff. We very quickly created our own songs, and it's interesting that [*despite*] that little timeframe, 1981 to 1984, those songs still have an impact today.

Mike, can you think back to the first time you ever heard about Mercyful Fate?

WEAD I was in my mid teens when I heard the first EP [*1982's* Mercyful Fate]. I was born and raised in the very north of Sweden, and this was also the early Eighties, so you didn't have anything like all the streaming platforms you have today. In the town next to mine, like half-an-hour away, they had a record store with [*one clerk*] who was into hard rock and metal. They had an import section, and there I found the Mercyful Fate mini-album. I thought the cover was so weird and evil-looking. I turned it around and saw the photo of King — he was so extreme for the time. I pretty much bought it without listening to it. I got home and I was floored. It sounded like a totally crazy, evil version of Judas Priest. When *Melissa* came out, I was trying to learn all the songs; same thing with *Don't Break the Oath*. [*They're*] still one of my favorite metal bands, even if I'm performing the songs.

LEFT: NEIL A. LIM SANG ABOVE: BRIT BOWMAN

When you were learning those songs as a teen, were you picking up Hank's parts or Michael Denner's parts?

WEAD At that time, I didn't know which was which. I was just trying to pick up on everything. I had not been playing guitar for that long, so I thought it was very complicated to play those parts. But I learned a lot. It was really like nothing I'd heard — maybe a bit like Judas Priest, but more progressive. Because of that, it probably changed my approach to guitar playing, and my own composing style. It influenced me a lot.

Hank and King, what do you remember about making those early records?

SHERMANN: For the mini-album, we had a Volkswagen van. [*We loaded*] our Marshall cabs and 100-watt Marshalls — a 1959 Super Lead was what I had at the time — and then we drove off to this studio in Holland [*Roosendaal's Stone Studio*]. The interesting thing with this is we performed it all live. Four songs in two days.

KING: We could not do the things we had planned for: overdubs, backing vocals, choirs and harmony guitars. It was like, "No, there's no time for this stuff!" We needed an intro solo for "Corpse Without a Soul." Hank had maybe done two attempts, and then the engineer said, "The one you're putting down now is the one you're putting on the album, alright?"

SHERMANN: When you're in the studio and you only have two days, you're under pressure. But that gives you a type of solo that might be more energetic, a little crazier, or more frenetic than if you'd [*spent*] four months at home trying to track that one solo. That's what I liked about the old days.

KING: We had six days [*of tracking*] to do *Melissa;* that was a lot for us! It might sound as if that's not much, and it isn't unless you're really prepared. We had been playing all those songs to death, though, by the time we went into the studio [*Copenhagen's Easy Sound Recording*].

SHERMANN: [*While making* Don't Break the Oath] I went home one night and kind of copied a piece of Johann Sebastian Bach's, from the Brandenburg Concertos, and I transcribed it. I taught Timi and Michael how to play it, and we added that to the ending of "Nightmare." Over-ambitious, playing-wise, but I wanted to experiment. Maybe I had a little inspiration from Yngwie Malmsteen or Uli Jon Roth.

Hank, you posted on Instagram about having to "brush up on songs you haven't played in 20 years." With the current setlist concentrating on the songs from the first EP, *Melissa* and *Don't Break the Oath,* what was the hardest song to relearn, and likewise what came back to you like second nature?

SHERMANN: I did a band with Michael Denner in 2015, and since we only had four songs [*when we started*], we had to look into the Mercyful Fate catalog. [Melissa's] "Evil" is very easy; for some reason I've always jammed that in other environments, or with other bands. The most obscure is like "Satan's Fall" [*also off* Melissa]. Me and Michael always did harmonies on the rhythm parts, but it's a little blurry on the original recordings [*who did what*] — [*there are*] a few headscratchers on those parts.

The rhythm sections and structures of the songs I've got figured out; the most difficult is to try and copy your lead sections. I was really punk and aggressive, and winging it in the studio — of course, I composed solos, too, but quite a few were winged in the studio. It's really tough to try and copy the recorded solos; I try to keep the highlights. I learned that if you try to be *so* on top of the original, you lose out on some musicality. It's better to loosen up and just make sure it has a swing with the music and the drums.

WEAD: For me, it's been more about getting into the groove of the band. There's so much rock 'n' roll in Mercyful Fate; King Diamond is more of a strict thing, when it comes to the music. That's the difference, for me at least, between Mercy and King Diamond: Mercyful Fate is slightly more old-school when it comes to grooves and riffs, whereas King Diamond wanted to go more theatrical and modern — a natural progression from Fate.

King, you've written some classic Fate songs over the years, like *Don't Break the Oath*'s "Come to the Sabbath," or "The Oath." Footage from the recent festival performances have shown you playing a mean air guitar on your crossbones microphone stand, but do you start writing your songs on guitar?

KING: Yeah, mostly guitar. For King Diamond I also write on keyboard, but Mercyful Fate is almost exclusively guitar. And whenever Hank writes stuff, I try to learn it [*on guitar*] so I know what's going on. It's a big help to be able to do that. Some of the [*vocal*] harmonies I'll work out on guitar, and then I'll sing it. But I don't know music; you can't give me a sheet of music and expect me to play off it. No way in hell! If the band are like, "This is in F minor," it's like, "I'm sure it is!" I have no intention to debate that; I have no clue. I can show you how I play it, though.

Have you laid down any guitar on a Mercyful Fate record?

KING: Only tiny little pieces. Like, if there was a weird precision to the fingering, [*the guitarists would be*] like, "Why don't you just do it yourself?" It's rare; only if necessary.

Hank and Mike, what guitars are you taking out on tour?

WEAD: It's a matter of what I think is right for the moment. I've been playing a lot of different guitars over the years — more modern Super Strats, like ESP Horizons — but these days I'm with Charvel, Jackson and, to some extent, Fender. On this tour I'll bring three Strats with me: two Charvel So-Cals and one American Standard Fender. I do tend to favor the American Standard. I had it re-fretted with extra-jumbo frets, and I changed the pickup configuration — at the moment I only have one humbucker on it, because Hank is covering most of the single-coil parts in Mercy.

SHERMANN: Back in the day, I used a Strat with a [*DiMarzio*] Super Distortion. I have kept that since the Eighties. I always use maple necks; that [*adds*] a little extra sharpness to it. Michael Denner always used the Flying V; maybe it was the combination of the Strats with that. Now I'm using a Hendrix Strat — reverse headstock with a Super Distortion in it.

Hank, there was another Instagram post of yours where you're playing the intro riff from "Melissa" at home, and you highlighted in the caption that the neck you'd played on the original recording was in the background. Curiously no body, though. Did anything notably dramatic happen to that guitar?

SHERMANN: Yeah, there was a lot of drama to that guitar. First of all, I'd just made a big change from playing a Flying V to a Stratocaster, I guess because of Uli Roth. I just felt [*at the time*] that I had to have a Stratocaster. So, I went to this shop in Copenhagen and bought this deluxe Strat, a Japanese copy made by Morris — a very fine company! It had brass nuts, a brass saddle. I used that guitar for *Melissa* and the entire *Don't Break the Oath* album. I installed the Super Distortion pickup angled the same as the single coil that was sitting in it before, kind of like what Van Halen did.

I had it on a U.S. tour in 1995, but before we went over, I had a new neck installed. It turns out someone stole the guitar in New Jersey while we were loading in. So, away the body went! [*Laughs*] But I still had the original neck at home.

Another time, [*while I was*] on vacation in the U.S., there was a flood in my basement in Copenhagen; the neck was lay-

ing there on the floor. It was underwater for at least a few days, and I couldn't do anything about it because I was in the States. That guitar had a rough time! But it means a lot to me to have the neck, as I played it on the two famous albums. To my luck, I found the exact guitar for sale in a newspaper in 2019, and I went out to buy it immediately. It's totally identical to what I had back then; it's very precious to me.

Rig-wise, what do you have going on at the moment?

WEAD: I use the Quad Cortex from Neural DSP. I have two of those with some custom profiles and presets that I made. That's pretty much it. We don't use any cabs onstage; we go straight to PA. I use a mix of wedges for the monitors on the stage, and in-ears. I take the clarity and the detail from the in-ears, and I take the power from the wedges.

SHERMANN: I've got two Kempers. Right now, I use a 1977 Marshall 2203 amp model that was profiled by someone clever; I use that as a main rhythm setting. I also use it for leads, [*but while*] boosting it a bit with reverb and delay. And then I have another setting where I use a lot of phase for "Satan's Fall." Back in the day, I had a Boss BF-2 flanger for the crazy intro to "Satan's Fall." For me, it's all about making the tone totally authentic to 1983 or '84.

What can you say about "The Jackal of Salzburg," the first brand-new material to surface from Mercyful Fate since the Nineties?

WEAD: It's one of the more epic songs out of the new ones I've heard. It's kind of bombastic, with a slight touch of doom metal, which is a bit different for Mercy. But then again, Mercy was never a band that stood still, either.

What would you think the timeline for this next album is?

SHERMANN: That's a really good question, because I really don't know, other than that I have at least eight or nine songs ready to be worked on. We already have three songs worked out, out of those, and the drums for "The Jackal of Salzburg" are recorded. I would also say it probably depends on what the reaction is from this U.S. tour. Maybe we might rethink the order of the releases. The plan is that King Diamond will focus on their *The Institute* album, but at the same time [*we'll*] work on the Mercyful Fate album. *The Institute* is designed to come out first. Hopefully they can both happen in 2023.

Mike, do you approach guitar technique any differently between the projects?

WEAD: Well, we're [*mostly*] doing stuff from the first albums, and, of course, Michael Denner was the guitar player on those albums. Therefore, like Joey's done with Timi's bass playing, I'm trying to respect Michael's guitar playing. Even if we're not the exact same style, I'm trying to stay in the same region.

On King Diamond's older songs with different guitarists, I'm trying to respect their stuff, too. Michael was much more Seventies/early Eighties influenced. He was more like a Michael Schenker — more rock 'n' roll — while in King Diamond, if you listen to Pete Blakk, for example — who was on [*1989's*] *Conspiracy*, and [*1990's*] *The Eye* — he had a [*then*] more modern approach to guitar playing, like Eighties shredder stuff. Two completely different guitar styles. So, in that way, I had to go to Mercy with a bluesy style. When I'm with King Diamond, I have to shred on the older songs. It's a bit different in the technique because of that, switching between the Seventies style and [*being a*] shred machine.

We've just passed the 40th anniversary of the release of Mercyful Fate's first EP; you're now touring and writing music together for the first time since the late Nineties. What keeps you all attached to the music and the musicians of Mercy after all these years?

SHERMANN: For the music part of it, over the timespan of 40 years I haven't really developed myself into too many other categories. Like, "Hey, can you play flamenco?" I'm not sure. "Could you play a Beatles song?" Again ... I'm not sure! I've stayed fairly narrow, just playing my stuff in my own style. I haven't bought new music for 25 years or so, so I'm basically listening to nothing. I enjoy my time going back to listen to [*Judas Priest's*] *Sin After Sin* — oh man, it's brilliant — but what really keeps me going is the composing phase. I'm always composing! I just can't help it. That is for sure what keeps me going: chasing fantastic songs.

WEAD: Looking from an outside perspective on the older albums, I still love them. They're excellent; the reunion albums are really good, too. So I still like the music [*the way*] I did when I was a teenager. And the guys are like family to me — King and Hank and BT [*Holm*], and also the guys in King Diamond.

KING: This is amazing, because I've been asked many times, "Are you going to do Mercyful Fate again?" I've never said never — the day the stars align properly, absolutely. But it has to be done right. It cannot be [*to just*] go with a [*stage*] backdrop, collect some money and piss on the name of Mercyful Fate. No way! Hank has the same opinion. That goes for King Diamond in the future, too. We have names that demand respect from ourselves, and we will do that to the utmost. The [*Mercyful Fate stage show*] now is the way it should've been seen in the early days. It's not the emperor's new clothes. Now you can see the clothes. GW

"We had six days to do *Melissa*," King Diamond says. "That was a lot for us!"

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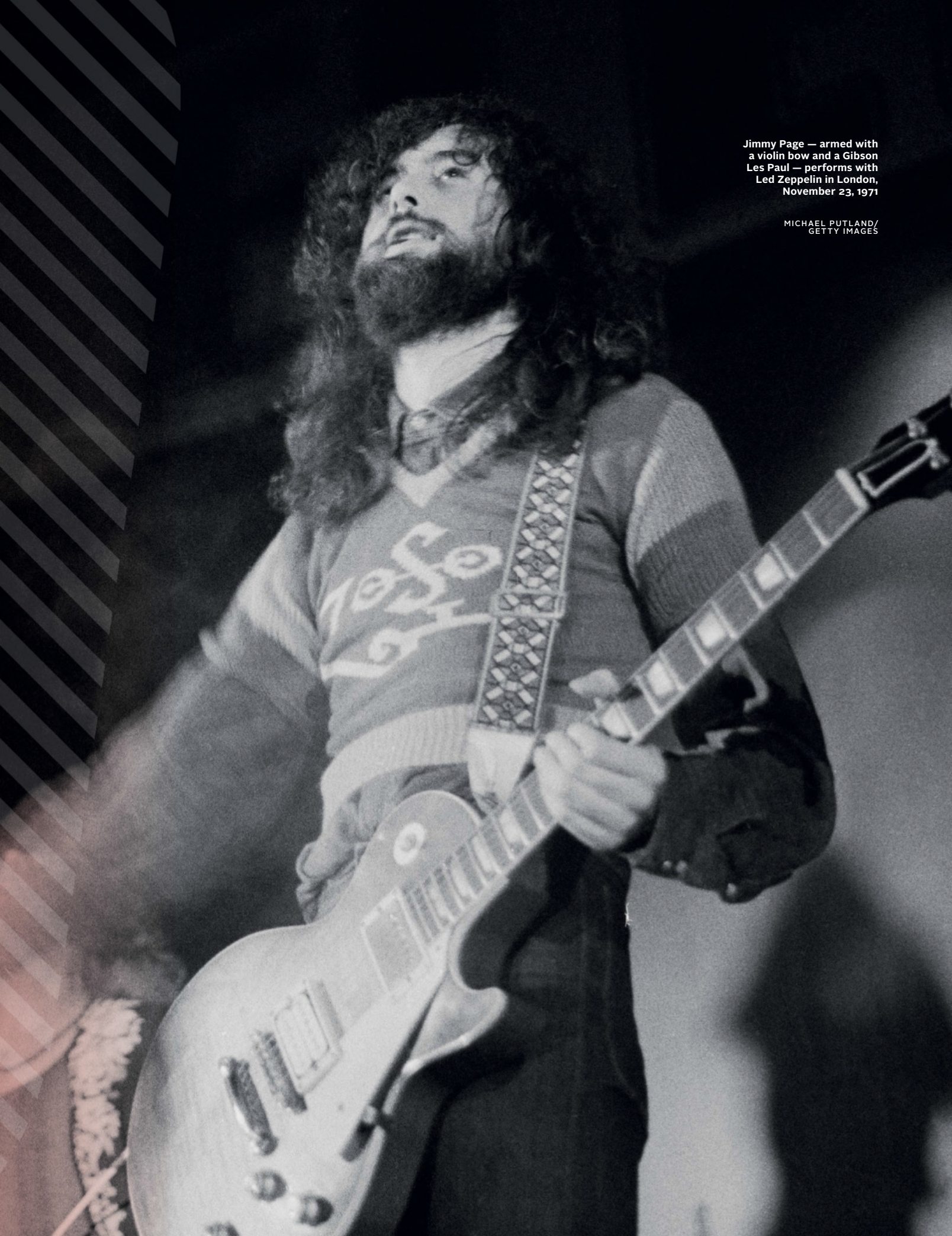
BY BRAD TOLINSKI



Jimmy Page — armed with a violin bow and a Gibson Les Paul — performs with Led Zeppelin in London, November 23, 1971

MICHAEL PUTLAND/
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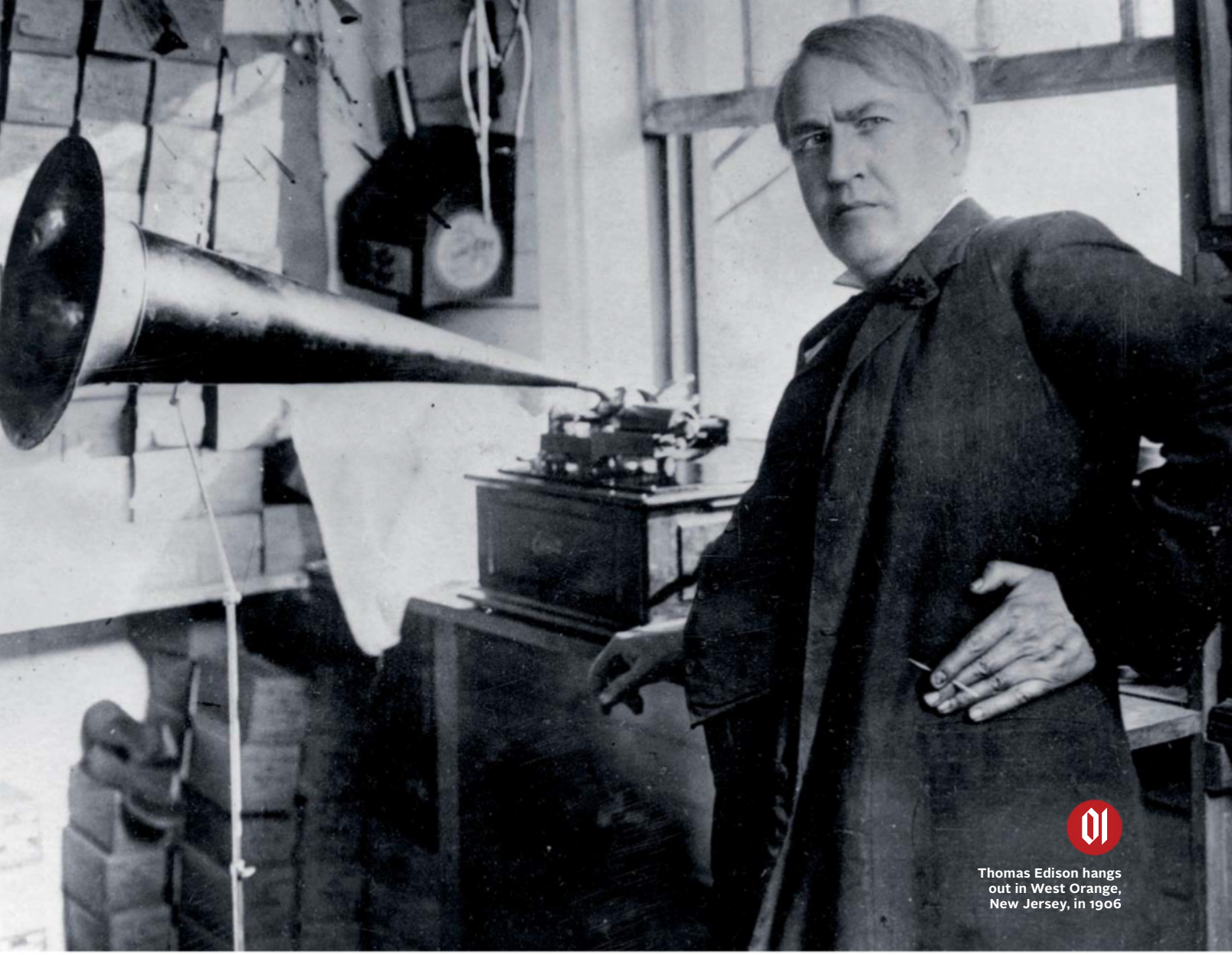

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Thomas Edison hangs out in West Orange, New Jersey, in 1906

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What does the first power station have to do with the electric guitar? Well, ya can't have an electric guitar without electricity, ya big dummy! In 1882 Thomas Edison helped form the Edison Illuminating Company of New York, which brought electric light to parts of Manhattan, but progress was, er, shockingly slow. Most Americans still lit their homes with gas light and candles for another 50 years. Only in 1925 did half of all homes in the U.S. have electric power, and it wasn't until 1960 that virtually all dwellings had electricity.

2. The first patent for an electric guitar design is given to inventor George Breed (September 2, 1890)

In September 1890, U.S. Navy officer George Breed was granted a patent for a design for an electrified guitar. His design

was based on a vibrating string in an electromagnetic field, but his "guitar" was small and extremely heavy, and it produced only exceptionally bizarre sustained sounds reminiscent of a cat in heat. Breed is now almost completely unknown as a musical-instrument maker and his instrument now resides in the dustbin of obscurity, but, hey, you gotta start somewhere...

3. Lee de Forest patents the first electronic amplification device (January 29, 1907)

Let's face it, an electric guitar without an amp sucks, and that's where Lee de Forest comes in. De Forest's father was a Congregational Church minister who hoped his son would also become a pastor; instead the young man invented the first electronic device for controlling current flow — the three-element "Audion" triode vacuum tube. This jump-started the Electronic Age and enabled the development of the electronic amplifier, which years later was used by bands like Slayer. So much for being a pastor's son. De Forest also boasted that he made, then lost, four fortunes. Sounds like our kind of guy!

4. The first paper-cone loudspeaker is developed by Chester Rice and Edward Kellogg (1921–1925)

If you think an electric guitar without an amp sucks, how about an amp without speakers? Yeah, the electric guitar needed those, too. Luckily, Chester W. Rice and Edward W. Kellogg, a couple of clever dudes who worked at General Electric laboratories, put their heads together and came up with the modern loudspeaker, which combined the moving coil driver mechanism with a paper cone diaphragm. They invented the concept in 1921, but it took until 1925 to improve the acoustics enough to compete with existing horn loudspeakers. The speaker's advantage was that it had a flatter frequency response than horn speakers and could reproduce adequate bass without the enormous length of sound path required in horns.

5. The Stromberg-Voisinet Electro, the first commercial electric guitar, is introduced to general indifference (1928–1929)

The Stromberg-Voisinet Electro was, by all reports, a substantial leap forward from George Breed's initial crude attempt at building an electric guitar. It employed an electromagnetic pickup device mounted beneath the top of a conventional hollow-body guitar, and it was capable of transforming vibrations from the instrument's wooden top into an electrical signal that could be amplified. So far, so good — but what did the S-V Electro sound like? It's difficult to say, because no surviving examples are known to exist. Only a small number of these guitars were produced in 1928, and by mid 1929 they had completely vanished from the marketplace. While some blame the Electro's failure on the Great Depression, historians have long speculated that so few players bought them because they sounded terrible, and those who did eventually tossed them in the trash.

04

An "American hornless" loudspeaker, developed by Chester Rice and Edward Kellogg

6. The production model of the Ro-Pat-In Electro A-25 "Frying Pan" hits the market (September 1932)

Now we're cooking with fire! Hailed as the first successful commercially produced electric solid body guitar, the Ro-Pat-In Electro "Frying Pan" wasn't much to look at, but it sounded fine and you could coax a respectable amount of volume out of it without incurring feedback. Invented by guitarist George Beauchamp, the "frying pan" (nicknamed because its circular body and long neck made it resemble a frying pan), featured an aluminum body and a pickup that incorporated a pair of horseshoe magnets that arched over the strings. While it was overshadowed by the flood of electric guitars that followed in its wake, true six-string aficionados will always regard the A-25 as the indisputable Big Bang.

7. The first public electric guitar performance (October 31, 1932)

If you play "Master of Puppets" in a forest, and there's no one around to hear it, does it make a sound? Probably. But let's face it, playing guitar is usually more satisfying when there's an audience to appreciate it.

The very first sale of an A-25 Frying Pan was to Wichita, Kansas, guitarist Gage Brewer, who made the purchase on September 21, 1932. He also holds the distinction of having given the first-ever known public performance with it. A press release issued to promote the concert informs us it took place at the Shadowland Pavilion, a Wichita nightclub that Brewer also owned, on Halloween night, 1932.

"We are at this time introducing the world's newest and most sensational instrument," the release crowed. "A new invention which is startling to the music world, making possible a combination of natural personal technique and electrical

LEFT: HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES RIGHT: SSPL/GETTY IMAGES

perfection." Indeed.

8. Gibson delivers the first ES-150 (November 20, 1936)

If the Frying Pan opened the door for the electric guitar, then the Gibson Guitar Corporation's ES-150 blew the entire barn down. The ES stood for Electric Spanish and the 150 reflected how much the guitar cost ($150 with an amplifier). Gibson had tried getting electric guitars onto the market as early as 1933, but their early attempts were somewhat primitive. Inspired by George Beauchamp's revolutionary pickup for the Frying Pan, Gibson commissioned Walter Fuller to develop their own electromagnetic pickup that would better Beauchamp's. Within weeks, Fuller succeeded, managing to create what is now commonly known as the "blade pickup," which is still coveted by jazz players today.

Guitarists flipped their lid for the hollow-body guitar, and early players included legends like Eddie Durham, Floyd Smith and the most famous of them, Charlie Christian, who gave the ES-150 "near mythical status."

9. American swing guitarist George Barnes makes the first commercial recording of an electric guitar in sessions with blues artist Big Bill Broonzy (March 1, 1938)

Many of you — okay, *all* of you — are probably unfamiliar with the name George Barnes, but back in the 20th century, he was a pretty big deal. According to Musician Union files, Barnes played on more recording dates for more people than any other guitarist in history, appearing on some 100 blues records in the 1930s alone. His session career continued to thrive for the next two decades, appearing on another couple hundred albums, including those recorded by Frank Sinatra, jazz legend Louis Armstrong and country artists Homer & Jethro. He was even the first person to play an electric guitar on a Bob Dylan recording (the unreleased 1962 track, "Mixed-Up Confusion").

But when he's mentioned these days, it's usually because he was arguably the first to record with an electric guitar, namely on Big Bill Broonzy's vibrant 1938 classic, "It's a Low-Down Dirty Shame." Barnes rips it up with a collection of dazzling jazzy licks that are both electrified and electrifying.

A 1936 Gibson ES-150 [*left*] and "the Log," Les Paul's prototype homemade electric guitar

NIGEL OSBORNE/REDFERNS

"I STUCK A NEWSPAPER AND SOME SACK PAPER IN IT, AND THAT'S WHERE WE GOT THE SOUND" — SAM PHILLIPS

50 GREATEST MOMENTS IN ELECTRIC GUITAR HISTORY

10. Les Paul begins work on "The Log" solid-body electric guitar (1939)

While most players in the 1940s were thrilled with Gibson's groundbreaking ES-150 (see Number 8), radio personality and superstar guitarist Les Paul was less than impressed. At higher volume levels the 150 was prone to feedback, which annoyed the heck out of him, so sometime in 1939 Paul started messing around with an idea that began with the 1932 Ro-Pat-In Electro A-25 "Frying Pan" — a solid body guitar.

Going back to square one, Paul started with a 4-x-4-inch slab of pine, roughly the length of a conventional archtop guitar body, attached a bridge, two wood-covered pickups that he made himself, and then hand-crafted vibrato tailpiece. He then attached "wings" to both sides of the block to make it look and feel more like a conventional guitar. To his delight, when he finally plugged it in, it sounded pretty good — and it didn't feed back. Les was elated with his invention, which he nicknamed "The Log," but when he brought the guitar to Gibson in 1941, they laughed at his "broomstick with a pickup." Little did the company know, a decade later, Les would get the last laugh when a refined version of his signature "broomstick" would become one of the most revered guitars of all time.

11. The Fender Electric Instrument Company is launched (1946)

Back in 1938, an electronics technician named Leo Fender opened a humble repair shop where he fixed broken radios, phonographs, instrument amplifiers and just about anything else with wires. However, after several years, Leo grew restless and became convinced that manufacturing would be more profitable than repair, and as an experiment he built a lap steel guitar in 1946 for country virtuoso Noel Boggs. Boggs was thrilled with it, which inspired Fender to go into the electric guitar making business.

Ironically, Fender never played an instrument himself, but he loved country music (and hanging out with musicians), and during the late Forties, he started focusing on more conventional guitar designs, building his first solid-body Esquire in March 1950, followed shortly afterwards by the Broadcaster in the fall of 1950. A trademark conflict with Gretsch led the Broadcaster to being renamed the Telecaster in 1951, and the rest is, as they say, history.

Perhaps the single most radical thing about Leo's Tele was the way the neck was attached to the body by means of four common bolts. It essentially disrupted several centuries of guitar making tradition, which stipulated that the only way to attach a guitar neck to the body was via a dovetail joint. Many guitar makers of the day sneered at the Tele for that reason, but it was a brilliant innovation that made the guitar more affordable and easily repaired.

12. The single "Lover" debuts Les Paul's "New Sound" (1947)

It's a popular misconception that Les Paul single-handedly invented the electric guitar, or at least the solid-body electric guitar. While he contributed substantially to the instrument's development, he most certainly did not invent the solid-body electric guitar, much less the electric guitar itself. However, there are several important guitar-related innovations that can be attributed to him.

Les loved to tinker, and for that reason he built his own recording studio in his Los Angeles garage. It was there he began to make some of earliest known multitrack recordings, using not tape but a disc-cutting lathe he built with flywheel from a Cadillac and outfitted with multiple cutting heads.

The result of this grand experiment was the extraordinary 1948 hit song "Lover," a *tour de force* featuring a staggering eight electric guitar parts, all played by Paul. The recording would go on to provide inspiration for Jimi Hendrix, Brian May and Jeff Beck, who told *Guitar World*, "It still sounds fresh today compared to most contemporary music."

13. Muddy Waters creates modern electric blues (April 1948)

Muddy Waters set in motion the blueprint for the modern electric blues and rock with his two landmark recordings, "I Can't Be Satisfied" and "I Feel Like Going Home," featuring his bottleneck slide on an amplified guitar supported by a driving rhythm section. This revolutionary new electric sound eventually inspired and gave birth to bands like the Yardbirds, Led Zeppelin and the Rolling Stones (who took their name directly from Muddy's classic "Rollin' Stone").

14. The release of "Rocket 88" by Jackie Brenston and his Delta Cats, arguably the first record featuring intentional guitar distortion (March 1951)

"Rocket 88" was not a particularly original song, but there was one element that made the track stand out from the rest. It was driven by something few people had ever heard — a raucous, distorted guitar sound. Producer Sam Phillips remembered, "the bass amplifier fell off the car. And when we got it in the studio, the woofer had burst; the cone had burst. So, I stuck a newspaper and some sack paper in it, and that's where we got the sound." Phillips loved the unconventional tone and apparently so did millions of music fans. "Rocket 88" soared to the top of the charts and became the third-biggest rhythm and blues single in jukebox plays of 1951.

15. The Fender Precision Bass is introduced and is the first electric bass to earn widespread attention (1951)

Before the invention of the Fender Precision, bassists had to lug around a physically cumbersome upright double bass. Besides making clarinetists snicker, the upright bass had other drawbacks. It was hard to hear in large band settings and the fretless fingerboard made it difficult for bassists to stay in tune. The Precision Bass, or "P-Bass," designed by Leo Fender in 1950, was created to specifically overcome most of those issues. And because he did his job so well, the venerable Fender four-string is still among the best-selling and most-imitated electric basses in popular music.

16. The Gibson Les Paul solid-body electric guitar is introduced (June 1952)

Les Paul — there's that name again. But

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Muddy Waters with a Gibson Les Paul (see number 16!) in Chicago in 1953

ABOVE: MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES FACING PAGE: JOBY SESSIONS/FUTURE

here's the weird thing: He had very little to do with the instrument that bears his name. The guitar we all know and love today was actually created by Gibson factory manager John Huis and his team with some minor adjustments by Paul.

Gibson Guitar president Ted McCarty essentially approached the guitarist for the right to imprint his name on the headstock with the idea that his visibility as a recording star would help sales. Think of it as one of the first guitar endorsement deals.

Les was intrigued, and in 1951, Gibson presented him with a nearly finished instrument for approval. McCarty later stated that the design discussions with Les were limited to the tailpiece and choices of wood. The 1952 Les Paul model ended up featuring a 1 ¾-inch thick mahogany body with a maple cap, a mahogany neck with a rosewood fretboard, two P-90 single coil pickups and a one-piece trapeze-style bridge/tailpiece with strings fitted under a steel stop bar.

While Paul was not completely satisfied with the finished goldtop instrument, he dutifully presented it to the public for the first time onstage in June 1952 at the Paramount Theatre in New York.

17. The Fender Stratocaster is introduced (1954)

After Fender unleashed the Telecaster in 1951, Gibson responded with their upscale Les Paul. Not to be outdone, Leo Fender went back to the drawing board to create a fancy-schmancy instrument of his own. The Stratocaster was the first Fender guitar to feature three pickups and a spring tension vibrato system, as well as being the first Fender with a contoured body. The sexy contoured body shape differed from the flat squared-off design of the Telecaster, and the Strat's double cutaways allowed players easier access to higher positions on the neck.

The guitar was an instant smash and has often been referred to as the "best selling guitar of all time." While that may or may not be true, suffice it to say it has received a big "thumbs up" from players like Jimi Hendrix, Eric Clapton, Jeff Beck, David Gilmour, the Beatles and Yngwie Malmsteen... and probably you.

18. The invention of the humbucking pickup (1957)

Since the 1930s there had been an inherent problem in guitar pickups, namely that dirty word that begins with an "h" and ends with an "m." No, not that word. Jeez... get your mind out of the gutter! We're talking about that bothersome buzz known as 60-cycle *hummmmm*.

Because the problem was so pervasive and annoying, during the mid 1950s there was something of a space race between Gibson and Gretsch to see who could solve the issue first. History shows that Gibson won the battle when Seth Lover created his immortal PAF (Patent Applied For) humbucking pickup. But Gretsch didn't go down without a fight. Around the same time, Ray Butts developed a similar pickup for Gretsch known as the Filter'Tron humbucker. Although Gibson's patent was filed almost two years before Gretsch's, Gibson's eventual patent was issued four weeks *after* Gretsch's. Still, the Gibson Les Paul Model and Les Paul Custom were the first guitars to use humbuckers in substantial production, so the invention tends to be thought of as their innovation, to which Ray was rumored to say, "Ain't that a kick in the Butts!"

19. Chuck Berry records the ultimate guitar anthem, "Johnny B. Goode," using his Gibson ES-350T (January 6, 1958)

With his 1958 masterpiece, "Johnny B. Goode," Chuck Berry created the ultimate rock 'n' roll folk hero in just a few snappy verses. As we all know, Goode wasn't pounding a piano, singing into a microphone or blowing a sax. In his choice of the electric guitar — something sleek and of the moment — the fictional character of Goode would forge an image of the archetypal rocker, doing much to shape the history of the instrument as any real-life figure ever has.

The song's opening riff is a clarion call — perhaps the greatest intro in rock 'n' roll history. It was played by Berry on an electric Gibson ES-350T, and it indeed sounded "just like a-ringin' a bell." To teenage ears, Berry's guitar signaled the dawn of an exciting new era — one that would use six-strings and an amp as its primary soundtrack.

20. The Vox AC15, the first tube amp featuring "overdrive" (1958)

Americans weren't the only ones building electric guitars and amps. As we shall see, the Brits made their fair share of contributions to our favorite instrument, starting with the much-overlooked Vox AC15 amplifier. In the late 1950s distortion was

An honest-to-goodness 1954 Fender Stratocaster, photographed in the U.K. in 2015

considered a problem, and amp makers at the time usually eliminated it with the aid of a "negative feedback circuit." British engineer and guitar nerd supreme Dick Denney decided he didn't like the effect the circuit had on his guitar sound and engineered his new Class A combo without the "party-pooper" electronics. This allowed the onboard EL-84 tubes to be pushed into overdrive without removing the desirable even order harmonics, resulting in rich, natural-sounding distortion. The result? An amp that paved the way for the future.

21. The wobbly creation of the pointy guitar (February 21, 1958)

Just as Leo Fender had responded to Gibson's Les Paul with his sleek and unconventional-looking Stratocaster, Gibson decided to strike back with no fewer than *three* wild-looking guitars designed to leave the Strat in the Stone Age — the Flying V, the Explorer and the Moderne.

Unfortunately, they were a little too ahead of the curve, and the V and the Explorer were commercial failures. Gibson quickly shelved the V and the Explorer, and the Moderne never even made it into

GIBSON STRUCK BACK WITH THREE WILD-LOOKING AXES

production. But that wasn't the end of their story.

Unbeknownst to Gibson, several important guitar influencers, including Albert King, Lonnie Mack and the Kinks' Dave Davies, loved their V's and were often photographed with their exotic instruments. Sensing a trend, Gibson started producing Flying V's again in 1968, this time with better sales. However, it took almost another decade before they began reissuing the Explorer after Hamer Guitars had success selling similar designs.

By the dawn of the 1980s, the V and the Explorer went from being black sheep to iconic heavy metal guitar mainstays, influencing countless "pointy" guitars designed by companies like Dean, ESP and Jackson.

22. Gibson is first to market with a mass-produced fuzz pedal, the Maestro FZ-1 Fuzz-Tone (1962)

What electric guitar player doesn't love pedals? I have a friend who views them as sort of currency, as in, "Geez, I could've bought two and a half pedals with the money I spent on groceries this week." Or, "With the dough I spent on those jeans, I could've bought an Electro-Harmonix Big Muff."

If you're a pedal enthusiast like my pal, you can thank Gibson's Maestro FZ-1 for getting the ball rolling in 1962. Designed by recording engineer Glenn Snoddy (good name!) and WSM-TV engineer Revis V. Hobbs (an even better name!), the Maestro was the first commercially available fuzz box to gain widespread acceptance.

Like anything new, the FZ-1 got off to a slow start. What kicked it into overdrive — and

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guitar pedals in general — was when Rolling Stones guitarist Keith Richards used one to play the gnarly riff in the band's 1965 mega-hit "Satisfaction." Immediately, every garage rock and psychedelic act had to have one, causing Gibson to sell every unit they had in stock. Sensing gold in "them thar hills," fuzz boxes suddenly started sprouting like mushrooms on an Italian cooking show, including the Mosrite Fussrite, the Sola Sound Tone Bender and the classic Dallas-Arbiter Fuzz Face used by another maestro — Jimi Hendrix. After that, *everything* gets a little fuzzy.

23. Ernie Ball introduces Slinky strings .010-.046 (1962)

In the years before Ernie Ball introduced his revolutionary Slinky strings in 1962, guitar players who wanted to bend strings were a little screwed. They'd have to buy a set of regular guitar strings with a wound third and a .013 high E and make a choice. They could either tune down a half-step to make the strings more bendable like Hendrix or Stevie Ray Vaughan. Or they could buy a new set, throw away the low E string, and move the rest of strings down and replace the high E with a super-light banjo string like Jimmy Page and Johnny Winter.

Thank your lucky stars a music store owner named Ernie Ball had the brains to stop the madness. He noticed young players were struggling to press down the wound third strings, which were "like a giant cable," and reported the problem to Fender, asking one of the company's sales reps to talk to Leo Fender himself. The rep returned with the news that Leo was not interested in making lighter-gauge strings because the lighter strings would force him to re-engineer his guitars to compensate for the different tension.

Ball knew a solid "fuck you" when he heard one, so he contacted an independent string manufacturer and had custom gauge sets produced with light, 24-gauge third string, which eventually led to the creation of Slinky strings in 1962. Ya gotta hand it to Ernie — the dude definitely had balls.

24. The Beatles make their U.S. television debut on *The Ed Sullivan Show*. George Harrison performs on a Gretsch Country Gentleman and John Lennon plays a Rickenbacker 325 (February 9, 1964)

There are millions of reasons why the Beatles were important, but if you ask me, their biggest contribution to music was creating the near-perfect formula for the modern rock band. In fact, it's rumored that when John Lennon sang "All You Need Is Love," what he really meant to say is, "All you need are two electric guitars, a bass and a drummer." It just wasn't as catchy.

Apparently, the kids understood what he meant, anyway. In 1964, an estimated 73 million people gathered in front of their television to gawk at John, Paul, George and Ringo laying it down on *Ed Sullivan* in front of a theater of teens going ape shit. The next day, thousands of those little dirt bags — including Gene Simmons, Joe Perry, Bruce Springsteen, Tom Petty and Nancy Wilson — ran out and bought guitars and started bands. The message had been received.

25. The Who's Pete Townshend smashes his guitar for the first time, onstage at the Railway Hotel, London (1964)

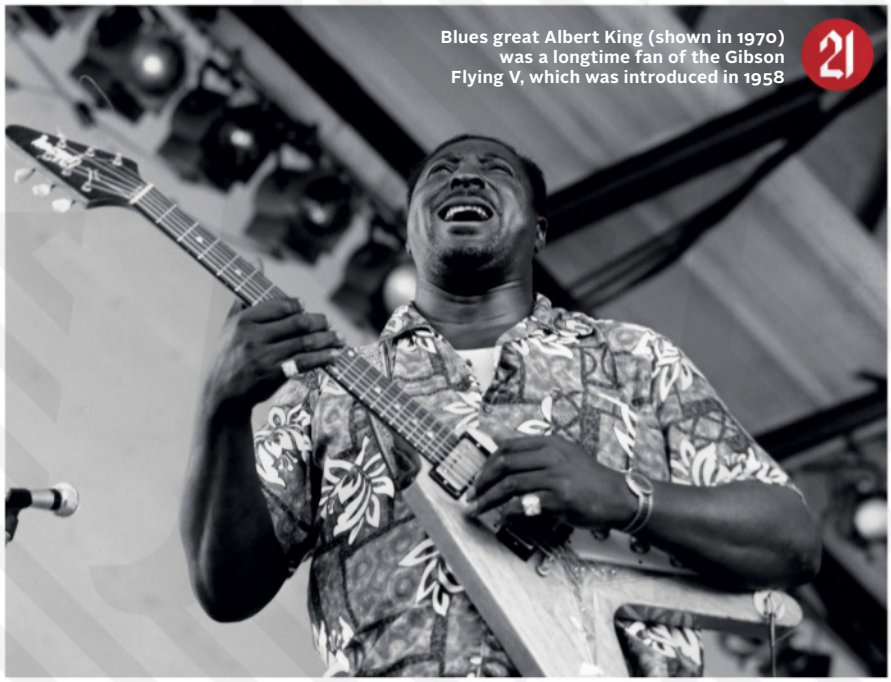
Pete Townshend was one of the first rock musicians to realize the guitar could be used for something more than just shredding solos or writing songs — it could also serve as the ultimate stage prop. During a typical performance by the Who, Townshend would pose, jump, windmill and throw his guitar into the air in dramatic fashion while playing some of the most exciting music of the 1960s and 1970s. And if he couldn't think of anything better to do, he'd simply smash it, which was fine, too.

26. The first Marshall 100-watt amp is created at Townshend's behest (1965)

We've just established that Townshend had a flair for the dramatic, so is it any surprise that he was one of the prime instigators behind the creation of the monolithic, mega-loud 100-watt Marshall stack? It all started when London-born big band drummer Jim Marshall opened a drum shop in London in 1960. At the urging of local rock musicians who frequented his shop, among them Townshend, he soon expanded into the sale of other musical instruments, including electric guitars and amps.

"Pete was one of the ones who came to me and said, 'In the music shops of West London they treat us like idiots because we play rock 'n' roll. So why don't you sell amplifiers and guitars in your shop?" recalled music store owner Jim Marshall. "I said, 'Well, I know a lot about drums but not guitars and amps. But I'll have a go at this.' I did and it was successful right from the word go."

Marshall then took it one step further and started designing and producing his own custom line of amps, starting with the classic 30-watt 1962 Marshall JTM45. But that wasn't quite enough for Townsh-



Blues great Albert King (shown in 1970) was a longtime fan of the Gibson Flying V, which was introduced in 1958

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THIS PAGE: DAVID REDFERN/REDFERNS/GETTY IMAGES FACING PAGE: JOSEPH BRANSTON/FUTURE

end, who was looking for even more volume. In 1965, the Who guitarist demanded that Jim build him the ultimate rock monster, a 100-watt behemoth that ultimately enabled him, Eric Clapton, Jimi Hendrix, Eddie Van Halen and others to generate feedback, doomsday distortion and enough volume to reach the furthest corners of any club or arena.

27. Brian May builds his Red Special guitar (1963-1964)

Years before Edward Van Halen built his Frankenstein or Steve Vai designed his Ibanez JEM, Queen's Brian May handcrafted his one-of-kind Red Special heard on songs like "Bohemian Rhapsody" and "Stone Cold Crazy." May's DIY instrument sent a message to guitarists everywhere: If you can't buy what you want, pull up your satin bellbottoms and make one yourself.

Constructed from wood from a "hundred-years-oldish" fireplace mantel, the guitar features three single-coil pickups and a custom-made aluminum bridge. The tremolo system was constructed from an old hardened-steel-knife-edge shaped into a V and two motorbike springs to counter the 79 pounds of string tension.

"My father and I designed the instrument from scratch, with the intention that it would have a capability beyond anything that was out there: more tunable, with a greater range of pitches and sounds, with a better tremolo and with a capability of feeding back through the air in a good way," May said. Mission accomplished.

28. *Blues Breakers: John Mayall with Eric Clapton*, is released, ushering in a new era of guitar heroics (July 1966)

Longtime *Guitar World* contributor Alan di Perna once hailed *Blues Breakers* as "one of the most important guitar recordings of all time — kind of like *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* for guitar players."

The reason? There are many. In addition to playing the blues with a cocky rock 'n' roll aggression, Clapton was the first to record with the magical combination of a Les Paul Standard plugged into one of Jim Marshall's recently invented 1962 JTM45, 30-watt amplifiers. His virtuosity combined with the amp turned up full volume turned the guitar-playing world on its head, inspiring future superstars like Jimi Hendrix, Duane Allman and Stevie Ray Vaughan to do the same.

"I was trying to emulate the sharp, thin sound that [*bluesman*] Freddie King got out of his Gibson Les Paul, and I ended up with something quite different, a sound that was a lot fatter than Freddie's," Clapton said.

27 Brian May's Red Special, which he designed with his father in the early Sixties

"I would hit a note, hold it and give it some vibrato with fingers, until it sustained and then the distortion would turn into feedback. It was all of these things, plus the distortion that created 'my sound'."

"MY FATHER AND I DESIGNED [IT] FROM SCRATCH" — BRIAN MAY

And it was a sound like thunder. No wonder shortly after people started calling Clapton "God."

29. The first wah-wah pedal is created by Warwick Electronics Inc./Thomas Organ Company (November 1966)

The invention of the wah-wah is a rather long and confusing tale, so we'll try to give you the short version, which shouldn't be confusing at all. It begins when a young engineer named Brad Plunkett was tasked by Thomas Organs to take apart a British Vox AC100 guitar amp and find a way to make it cheaper to produce while still maintaining the sound quality. Thomas had made a deal to distribute Vox in the U.S., and they were looking to save a few bucks along the way. Somewhere during the process Plunkett succeeded in designing a new circuit that could change the frequency of notes by simply rotating a potentiometer.

"I asked a friend of mine to plug a guitar into this pile of wires, resistors and capacitors I had on a bench," Plunkett said. "He strummed a few chords while I turned the knob on the potentiometer, and it went 'wah-wah-wah.' I thought, 'Wow! This is really great!'"

Initially, the company thought the effect would be great for trumpets and other wind instruments, but when guitarist and Vox employee Del Casher stumbled upon Plunkett's early prototype, he recognized its incredible potential for the guitar and convinced upper management to market it to

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the six-string nerds.

Almost immediately after being released in 1966, *the* chief six-string nerd, Frank Zappa, bought one and spread the word to his guitar compadres, like Eric Clapton and Jimi Hendrix. As Hendrix told reporters, "It's got a very groovy sound." And everyone that heard Clapton use it on Cream's "White Room," or Hendrix on "Voodoo Chile (Slight Return)" agreed... the wah was, indeed, groovy.

30. *Guitar Player*, a popular magazine for guitarists, is founded (1967)

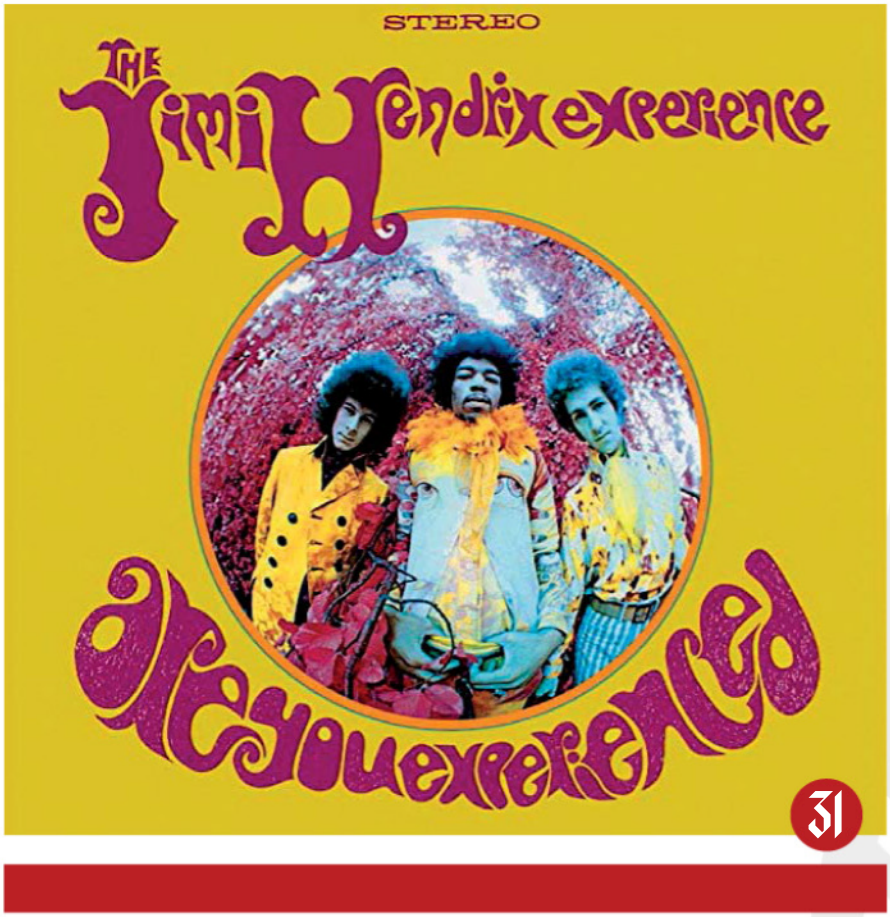
A magazine? Just for guitarists? Now, that's just ridiculous...

31. The release of *Are You Experienced*, the debut album by the Jimi Hendrix Experience (May 12, 1967)

When *Are You Experienced* hit the record stores, it was like a transmission from Jupiter. If Eric Clapton had discovered a way to make the guitar sound larger (see Number 28), Jimi changed just about everything else. From the proto-metal of "Foxy Lady" to the wild psychedelic blues of "Red House" to the phantasmagorical studio trickery of "Third Stone from the Sun," it felt like Jimi was reinventing and reimagining the electric guitar with every song... or perhaps every note. As British rock journalist and guitar aficionado Charles Shaar Murray noted, the album "completely changed notions of what guitar could sound like, or indeed, what music could sound like." Revolutionary.

32. Jimi Hendrix closes the Woodstock Music and Art Fair with a set that includes "The Star-Spangled Banner" (August 18, 1969)

If a poll were taken to determine the single most influential electric guitar performance in the instrument's entire history, the majority of votes would most likely go to Jimi Hendrix's astonishing performance of "The Star-Spangled Banner" at Woodstock. By taking the well-known hymn to American battle victory and inserting explosive whammy bar dives and high-pitch squeals to emulate human cries of agony, Hendrix used his guitar to plunge



his listeners into the chaotic and disquieting sonic reality of battle itself.

Hendrix, who had served in the military, understood the horror, grief and valor associated with war, and knew that what he wanted to express was beyond words, so he let his guitar do the talking instead. Miraculously, he transformed his Fender Stratocaster into an instrument of political commentary and social change — and everyone understood.

33. Gruhn Guitars opens in Nashville, becoming the flagship for the burgeoning vintage guitar market (January 2, 1970)

Is it weird to start the section on modern times with an entry about vintage guitars? Definitely. But the truth is, the idea of sky-high price tags on old instruments is a rather new construct.

In the 1970s, American guitar manufacturers had gotten sloppy, cutting corners on the construction of new guitars. This development led to musicians to reassess older instruments and to their surprise, smart guys like Joe Walsh (Eagles) and Rick Nielsen (Cheap Trick), discovered they were damned good.

But the man perhaps most responsible for spreading the gospel of vintage was George Gruhn, owner of the world-famous Gruhn Guitars in Nashville. Gruhn opened his first shop specializing in used and older guitars in 1970. "Back then there weren't any stores nearby that were selling vintage instruments," Gruhn said. "And serious musicians weren't interested in new stuff because it was all crap; 1970 was a low, low point for new-instrument quality. So we met Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young, Bob Dylan, Joni Mitchell, Eric Clapton, Duane Allman... you name it."

From that point on, the mystique of classic instruments just grew and grew, as did Gruhn's shop. Gruhn Guitars now resides in a three-story building at 2120 8th Ave. South in Nashville, and visiting there can be overwhelming. But chances are, you'll stumble upon something that is hipper and hotter than anything you'll find at Guitar Center.

34. Black Sabbath and the invention of heavy metal (February 13, 1970)

No other genre of music has done as much to keep the electric guitar alive and chug, chug, chugging along than heavy metal. But one thing that bands like Ghost, Polyphia,

FACING PAGE: CHRIS WALTER/WIREIMAGE

Lamb of God or Apes all have in common is they owe some debt of gratitude to the OG's of metal, Black Sabbath.

Recorded in a single 12-hour session on October 16, 1969, Black Sabbath's debut is widely regarded as the first heavy metal album. Central to the band's innovative heavy sound was guitarist Tony Iommi's detuned guitar. Much of his new sound was developed after an accident at a sheet metal factory in which the tips of the middle fingers of Iommi's fretting hand were severed. Determined to keep playing guitar, he created a pair of false fingertips using plastic from a dish detergent bottle and detuned the strings on his guitar to make it easier for him to bend strings. The result was a gigantic new guitar tone.

His impairment also limited his note choices, forcing him to concentrate on building his compositions around power chords and parallel fifths, which also became a hallmark of heavy metal.

"I'd play a load of chords and I'd have to play fifths because I couldn't play fourths because of my fingers," Iommi said.

While critics of the day dismissed Black Sabbath's music as "bullshit necromancy," there is no doubt the band's music and influence will live on long after we're all six feet under.

35. Led Zeppelin releases *IV*, featuring "Stairway to Heaven" (November 8, 1971)

For every "yin" there's gotta be a "yang," and if Black Sabbath opened up a metal stairway to hell with songs like "Paranoid," then leave it to Led Zeppelin to respond by constructing a celestial "Stairway to Heaven." Yes, there are two paths you go down in the long run, and there's still time to get tossed out of your local music store by playing a shitty version of either.

36. Larry DiMarzio builds and markets his first Super Distortion pickup, kicking off the replacement-parts revolution (1972)

One of the inevitable results of the decline of guitar manufacturing in the 1970s was the creation of the "aftermarket replacement parts" industry — an unsexy name for a resourceful group of independent tinkerers who started making guitar parts and accessories that improved inferior factory-made instruments.

Leading the charge of this revolution was a young Staten Island, New York, musician and guitar technician named Larry DiMarzio, who built his first Super Distortion pickup as a replacement for factory Gibson humbuckers in 1972.

"I started building my own pickups for the most practical reason," DiMarzio says. "I wanted my guitar to sound better. I wanted to get a bigger sound than what I was getting out of the standard pickups of the day. It turned out others did, too."

37. A 19-year-old Paul Reed Smith sells two of his earliest handmade instruments to Ted Nugent and Peter Frampton (1976)

Paul Reed Smith heard destiny calling early. At 16 he started tinkering with guitar building in high school woodshop, but by his senior year it had become something of a full-blown obsession, when he landed part-time work as an instrument repairman at Washington Music Center in Maryland.

During his employment, he was often shocked by what he saw. It was one thing to fix an older instrument that had fallen into disrepair, but more often than not he was being asked to fix up brand-new instruments that had been shipped directly from factories.

"I saw an opportunity," he said. "I didn't see myself as somebody who was going to change the guitar industry, but I could see how I could make a difference by doing things right."

And that's exactly what he did. In 1976 he built some of his earliest guitars for "Motor City Madman" Ted Nugent and Peter Frampton, and word began to quickly spread among the guitar elite about this young genius from Maryland and his spectacular instruments. Ten years later he founded PRS Guitars, and his continued commitment to excellence made him one of the biggest and most respected guitar manufacturers in the world.

"It was Paul Reed *fucking* Smith that forced Gibson and Fender to get back into the game," Nugent said. "In the late 1980s, they realized this kid was kicking their ass, and they finally started making really good guitars again."

38. Eddie Van Halen constructs his first "Frankenstein" guitar (1976)

If you've been paying attention to the last four for five entries, you've probably noticed a theme — namely American guitar companies like Fender and Gibson hit a rough patch in the 1970s. The decline in quality was due primarily to corporate takeovers that tried to maximize profits by cutting corners on quality, and as we've seen, dudes like Larry DiMarzio and Paul Reed Smith were none too happy with the situation. And you can add one more name to that list: a young Dutch kid named Eddie Van Halen, who couldn't find anything that sounded "right" to his ears.

His solution was the same as theirs. He took matters into his own hands. By grabbing various parts from guitars he liked — a Gibson humbucker here and a Strat vibrato

"I COULD MAKE A DIFFERENCE BY DOING THINGS RIGHT"
— PAUL REED SMITH

Black Sabbath in 1970; [*from left*] Bill Ward, Tony Iommi, Ozzy Osborne and Geezer Butler

An Ibanez JEM7V, photographed in 2008

system there — and slapping them on a replacement ash body from a local shop, he cobbled together arguably the most iconic guitar in the history of rock 'n' roll and the true prototype for the uber-popular super Strat. "People tripped out on that, but I'd try anything to make something work," laughed the late Eddie Van Halen. And that's one guitar lesson worth learning.

39. *Guitar World* is launched (1980)

Another magazine just for guitarists? Now, that's just ridiculous...

40. Boston guitarist Tom Scholz invents the Rockman, and the "amp simulator" is born (1982)

Most players probably think amp simulators are relatively new inventions, but they're as old as Boston — the band, that is.

Tom Scholz, the guitar genius behind Boston hits like "More Than a Feeling" and "Don't Look Back," was an MIT-trained engineer, and in 1982 he started his own guitar technology company Scholz Research & Design. His first product was the Rockman headphone electric guitar amplifier, a remarkable unit that could also plug directly into the mixer on stage or in a studio, effectively making it a DI box for many guitarists. In many ways, it became

AMP SIMULATORS ARE AS OLD AS BOSTON – THE BAND, THAT IS

the sound of the 1980s and was used almost exclusively by Def Leppard on their groundbreaking *Hysteria* album, and by artists Joe Satriani and Megadeth.

The Rockman was an innovative idea, but it took a while for other companies to catch on, starting with Tech 21's iconic 1989 SansAmp. Today, digital amp simulation and its more sophisticated big brother, amp modeling, are more prevalent than ever, with the Kemper Profiler and Fractal Audio's Axe-FX leading the charge. But it all goes back to the brainiac from Boston, the wicked-smaht Scholz.

41. "Beat It" — written and performed by Michael Jackson, featuring Eddie Van Halen on lead guitar — is released. Its music video is often credited as paving the way for Black artists on MTV (March 31, 1983)

When MTV made its debut at 12:01 a.m. Eastern Time, Saturday, August 1, 1981, it was launched with the words, "Ladies and gentlemen, rock and roll." And for the next couple of years that was its focus — rock 'n' roll. Specifically, rock 'n' roll performed by white artists like Def Leppard, Billy Idol and Van Halen. As the music channel exploded, naturally popular Black r&b and hip-hop musicians started feeling left out, if not downright discriminated against. And rightly so. Still, the executives at MTV were happy with the way the channel was being received and mostly turned a deaf ear.

It wasn't until Michael Jackson's "Beat It," featuring a chugging heavy metal riff recorded by Steve Lukather and topped with a spectacular solo by Eddie Van Halen, that the music channel began to see that Black music could and should be an essential part of their mix. Shortly after, MTV opened the door for Jackson, and other African-American artists like Prince, Whitney Houston, Tina Turner, Lionel Richie and Run-DMC, and the music world was a much better place for it.

42. Stevie Ray Vaughan releases *Texas Flood*, reinventing and reinvigorating electric blues (June 13, 1983)

Ever since Muddy Waters first plugged in his slide guitar in the late 1940s, the blues had played a major role in the continuing story of the electric guitar. But by the 1980s the genre started feeling antiquated, especially when compared to the fireworks generated by rockers like Van Halen, Randy Rhoads and Steve Vai.

With *Texas Flood*, Stevie Ray Vaughan changed that and almost single-handedly brought the blues back from the dead. By fusing the formalism of Eric Clapton with the wildness of Jimi Hendrix and adding a pinch of the virtuosic swagger found in 1980s hair metal, SRV made playing the blues hip again.

Despite his premature death in 1990 at age 35, the Texas guitarist can be credited with paving the way for new generations of blues guitarists, including Joe Bonamassa, Eric Gales, Gary Clark Jr., Samantha Fish, Marcus King and others. The result is that the blues is/are still alive and well, and the scene is as vibrant as it's ever been.

43. Metallica releases *Kill 'Em All* and reinvents heavy metal for the modern era (July 25, 1983)

Just as dozens of young Brits repackaged the music of Black American blues and sold it back to us as the Rolling Stones, the Yardbirds and Cream in the 1960s, three aggressive Americans (and a rather loquacious drummer from Denmark) returned the favor by stealing as much as they could from British metal bands like Judas Priest, Iron Maiden and Motörhead in the 1980s, making millions in the process.

Of course, Metallica put a little of their own spin on those influences by speeding up the tempos and making each rapid-fire power chord at least a pound or two heavier. And it was those slight variations that started a revolution that goes on to this day. The speed, power and agility of Metallica opened the door for Slayer, Megadeth, Anthrax, Testament and just about every metal band that came after them.

44. Ibanez introduces the Steve Vai JEM series (1987–1990)

If all Steve Vai did was introduce a new level of virtuosity to the electric guitar via his groundbreaking work with Frank Zappa and his solo albums like *Passion and Warfare*, he would've deserved a place on this list as a game changer. But it's perhaps his contribution to electric guitar design that will end up having the most lasting impact on the instrument.

While Eddie Van Halen tends to get the lion's share of the attention for his inno-

THIS PAGE: FUTURE FACING PAGE: MICHAEL LOCCISANO/GETTY IMAGES

vative Frankenstein guitar, Vai's signature JEM series is perhaps just as innovative and influential. With features like a floating whammy bar, a 24-fret neck with a deeper cutaway, a yank-proof input jack, a combination of both humbucking and single-coil pickups for maximum tonal flexibility, and an all-important seventh string on his JEM Universe models, Steve's Ibanez signature guitars are Ground Zero for all the new-school seven- , eight- and nine-string guitars that followed in its wake.

45. Buckethead releases his first album, ushering in new era of virtuosity (1992)

When Pomona, California, guitarist Brian Patrick Carroll, aka Buckethead, released his first album *Bucketheadland* on John Zorn's Japanese Avant label, it elicited a collective gasp among guitar players. First, there was his appearance — he only performed wearing an expressionless white mask topped with a KFC bucket on his head. While that was sorta freaky, it didn't compare to otherworldly chops that made speedy players like Joe Satriani, Eddie Van Halen, Yngwie Malmsteen and Paul Gilbert sound like they were running in quicksand. With *Bucketheadland, he* took sheer blinding speed and technique to another level.

Since then, a new generation of equally astonishing guitarists have emerged, whose main purpose seems to be making other players cry, including Tosin Abasi and Javier Reyes (Animals As Leaders); Tim Henson and Scott LePage (Polyphia), Guthrie Govan and Andreas Varady.

46. Line 6 Amp Farm and the rise of software amp modeling (1998)

A bit more than 20 years ago — when most of us were just starting to come to grips with the idea of shoving our entire lives onto our laptop — some wise guy at Line 6 came up with the idea of stuffing a whole bunch of desirable amplifiers in there, too, and the Amp Farm licensed amp model collection was born.

These days plugins by companies like BIAS, Blue Cat, IK Multimedia and Line 6 are so damned omnipresent in recording studios, that you're lucky if an engineer doesn't escort you to the door if you roll up with a traditional head and a 4x12 cab. When *Guitar World* spoke with John Meyer a couple of years ago, he said he still takes an amp with him when he does a session, but 99 percent of the time the producer will use the direct to digital track in the final mix. Are traditional amps toast? Who knows. But they are definitely getting a little brown around the edges.

47. Jack White of the White Stripes buys a vintage 1966 Montgomery Ward Airline guitar from Detroit musician Jack Yarber (aka Jack Oblivian) and revives interest in what many had considered "junk" guitars from the 1960s (1999)

Next time you wander into a NAMM Show and notice all these weird-looking guitars that look like vintage coffee tables and wonder where the hell they came from, thank (or blame) Jack White, who elevated the Airline guitar to retro icon status.

48. YouTube guitar instruction (2003)

Back in 2003, Australian guitarist, songwriter and educator Justin Sandercoe had a swell idea: Why not offer a few guitar lessons online to promote his private one-on-one lessons. Due to his amiable presence and the clarity of his instruction, Sandercoe became an early YouTube superstar, and his idea caught fire, inspiring countless guitar teachers to do the same. And it's free.

St. Vincent with her Ernie Ball Music Man signature model in January 2017

50 GREATEST MOMENTS IN ELECTRIC GUITAR HISTORY

49. St. Vincent's Ernie Ball Music Man signature model (2016)

It's not difficult to come up with a new guitar design, but it's almost impossible to come up with one that thousands of players will love. As women such as Yvette Young, Rebecca and Megan Lovell (Larkin Poe), Nita Strauss, Nili Brosh and Sophie Lloyd rise to prominence as some of the brightest lights in contemporary guitar, perhaps it makes sense that the hippest and most popular guitar in ages was created by Anne Clark of St. Vincent.

Used by Clark and people like Jack White, Tom Morello and J Mascis, her angular instrument, with its mini humbuckers, has received universal praise from guitar magazines, with *Guitar World's* Chris Gill saying, the guitar's "bold design is the sort of thing that guitarists will either love or hate from the get go, but it's impossible not to fall in love with it when you pick it up and play it. Whether playing in a seated or standing position, everything falls perfectly into place, and the neck just begs to be played." Our prediction: Move over, Les Paul; the St. Vincent model will be around for a very long time.

50. The rise of the "smart amp" (2019)

Okay, it secretly grinds my gears to discover an amp that appears to be more intelligent than I am. Sigh. Perhaps I need to go to a repairman and get "re-tubed." That said, the Spark 40 and its little brother, the battery-powered Spark MINI, are pretty brilliant. In addition to being one of the best-sounding practice amps on the market, they include a companion app that allows you to program and tweak more than 10,000 sounds. If that's not enough, the Spark app also has a feature that'll analyze what you play and automatically create a bass and drum part that complements it, and, if you're feeling lazy, it can also figure out the chords to your favorite songs.

Is A.I. the future? Most likely. Now, if they can only invent an amp that serves a cold beer... GW

BOARD STIFF

Editors' choice: Eight of our favorite pedalboards

BY AMIT SHARMA

CHANCES ARE, UNLESS YOU'RE THE kind of player who sticks to just one overdrive or a wah between your guitar and amp, you've started to amass quite the collection of pedals and need something that can house them all neatly. All those power cables and patch cords can start to become an eyesore, and connecting them before every rehearsal or gig can quickly get tedious — which is why it makes sense to have all your favorite pedals safely secured on a board that can be easily transported.

It'd be fair to say these floor units originated from simplistic designs — a box with a few holes in it, in layman's terms — although, just like other kinds of music-related equipment, they've undergone their own process of evolution. Some pedalboards, for example, might double as a guitar stand, which means fewer trips to the car or van when loading in and, more importantly, fewer broken headstocks to deal with. Others might have a detachable lid and wheels that effectively turn into a suitcase — a very practical solution for the musician on the move. And then there are options for boards that expand as your pedal collection grows, meaning you can customize the size of the unit by your feet for whatever gig you might be playing. Given how collectable and expensive some pedals are, there are even options that involve no Velcro or adhesives whatsoever, which will help keep your most prized goods in mint condition and ultimately improve your chances of reselling them at maximum value, should you ever need to.

Here are eight of our current favorite pedalboards, each with their own unique take on keeping everything locked down firmly by your feet.

SOME PEDALBOARDS MIGHT DOUBLE AS A GUITAR STAND, WHICH MEANS FEWER TRIPS TO THE CAR OR VAN WHEN LOADING IN

BOSS
BCB-1000

boss.info, $299

As anyone who has carried eight or more effects in one go will be able to tell you that pedalboards can get very heavy, very quickly. Which is why the arrival of the BCB-1000 from Boss was met with high praise, effectively housing everyone's prized stompboxes in a suitcase that can be easily wheeled around, thanks to the retractable handle and built-in wheels. It's even sized to meet typical carry-on luggage requirements, which means you can keep a close eye on your pedals when traveling by air. "But what if something were to happen to my beloved Klon while its wheels are in motion?" we hear you cry. Fret not, as the BCB-1000's custom molded design guarantees risk-free transportation. Once you detach the lid's four latches, there's an angled aluminum mounting surface that supports two rows of pedals, with extra space underneath for cable routing and power. Truth be told, we wouldn't expect anything less from Boss.

PEDALTRAIN
CLASSIC JR
pedaltrain.com, $139

Dependably robust, ultra light and highly affordable, it's easy to see why Pedaltrain have become the industry standard for guitarists and bassists who like extra tonal options under their noses. Their pedalboards are backed by a lifetime warranty — which is reassuring for touring musicians who are constantly on the move and require a floor unit they can trust in time and time again. With a width of 18 inches that can fit 10 regular-sized pedals and a raised elevation of one inch, the Classic JR is one of the company's all-round best sellers. It comes with 72 inches of professional-grade hook-and-loop Velcro, an assortment of zip ties and a water-resistant soft case with a shoulder strap to help you get around without any hiccups. If you're traveling long distances or by air, however, you might want to consider upgrading to their heavy-duty tour case for an extra $60.

THESE BOARDS USE RUBBER-COATED FASTENERS TO HOLD YOUR PEDALS IN PLACE, AND THEIR ANTI-SLIP SURFACE ENSURES NOTHING GIVES WAY OR GETS SCRATCHED

ACLAM
SMART TRACK L2
aclamguitars.com, $180

Barcelona-based Aclam have created a name for themselves by designing boutique pedals that recreate some of the most game-changing tones in rock music, such as the Dr. Robert, which replicates the iconic Vox UL730 made famous by the Beatles — or the Woman Tone overdrive capturing Clapton's era-defining sounds in Cream. But the Spanish company are perhaps best known for producing revolutionary pedalboards that require no glue or Velcro or zip ties whatsoever, thus preserving the value of your most collectable stompboxes. Instead, these boards use rubber-coated fasteners to hold your pedals in place, and their anti-slip surface ensures nothing gives way or gets scratched. The Smart Track L2 can fit up to 14 standard-sized effects and also includes 56 fasteners, a support bracket for fixing your power supply underneath and a soft case, which they promise keeps things light and "protects what really matters." Very clever thinking!

GATOR

GIG BOX JR

gatorcases.com, $199

This ingenious design from case veterans Gator is a travel-friendly suitcase that is half pedalboard and half guitar stand, which means it can accommodate three electrics or one acoustic alongside two electrics. Because, let's face it, a lid is pretty much useless when not in use — so why not double up on practicality? The pedalboard surface area is 21.25" x 15" and can hold up to 10 regular-sized pedals with the supplied hook-and-loop fastener. It's clearly built to last, with a black tolex exterior, a black plush-lined stand section and a carpet-lined interior for where your pedals live. At $199, we think it's a bit of a steal, but for $70 more, there's a version that comes with Gator's G-BUS-8 multi-output 1700 milliamp power unit, which saves you $60 off the supply's standalone price, working out as a very good deal indeed.

D'ADDARIO DESCRIBE THEIR XPND UNITS AS "THE ONLY PEDALBOARD YOU'LL EVER NEED." GRANTED, A LOT OF COMPANIES MIGHT TELL YOU THAT...

MONO

MEDIUM

monocreators.com, $249

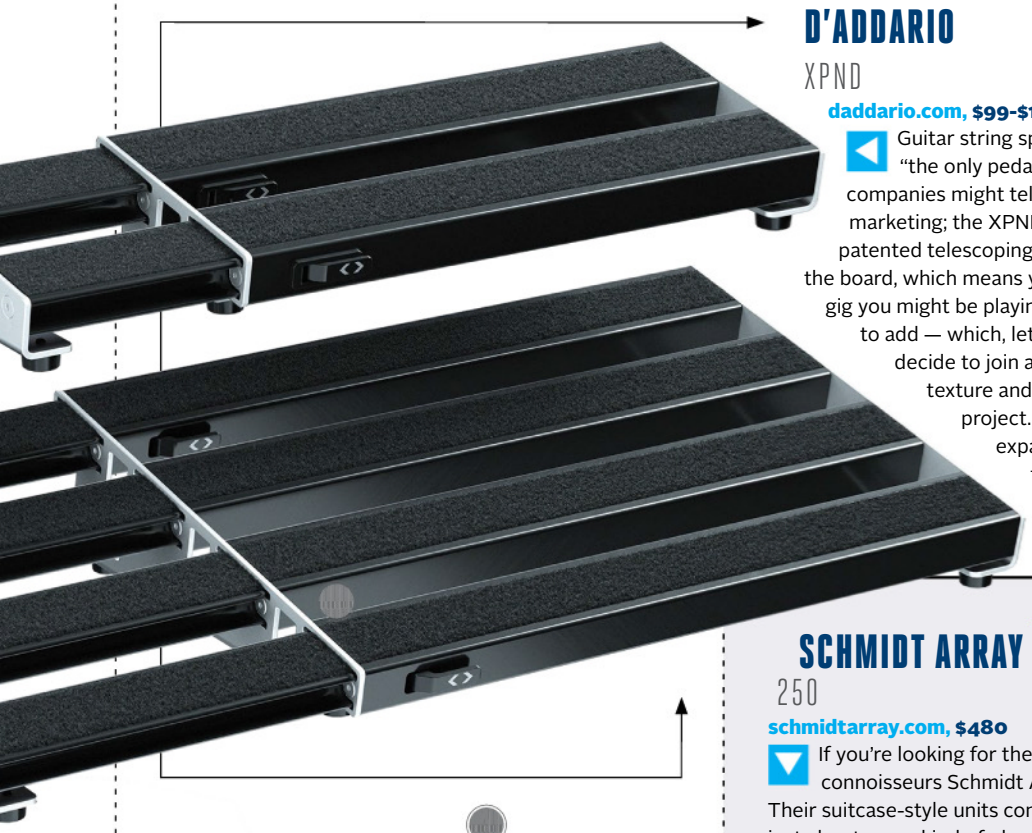
Made out of a single piece of laser-cut aluminum with a corrosion-resistant, anodic oxide finish, Mono pedalboards are renowned for being hardy and lightweight in equal measure. The numerous cutouts on the face of each unit make cable routing a breeze, helping to promote a cleaner and sleeker-looking board that keeps mess to a minimum. On the underside, the rubber feet add stability and shock absorption, while Mono's Rise and Rise+ accessories can be added above to help customize and tweak your own pedal layout. Pedals can be mounted with the hook-and-loop tape provided, and once you've got everything patched and powered, the premium accessory case will help keep everything safe while in transport, thanks to its rugged interior liners and plush top panels to protect knobs and switches. Available in black or silver, it's more of a minimalistic approach to pedalboards, but more importantly one you can rely on.

WARWICK

ROCKBOARD DUO 2.2

shop.warwick.de, $90

With space for up to nine effects on its lightweight and rigid cold-rolled aluminum frame, the Rockboard Duo 2.2 will cover most players' needs with relative ease at a very affordable price. The slot-based design means you can configure your pedals in just about any layout with cables kept out of sight, making sure you only see what you need to see. It's compatible with Warwick's Quickmount plates, which allow users to swap and fasten pedals in a matter of seconds without any need for adhesives or tie-wraps — making sure there's next to no wear and tear on your valued possessions. For those less fussed, the hook-and-loop tape and ties provided will be good enough to secure everything safely. Though it retails for $90 with a gig bag, we reckon the extra $70 for a flight case is definitely worth it. Ultimately, it comes down to how valuable and replaceable your pedals are.



D'ADDARIO

XPND

daddario.com, $99-$179

Guitar string specialists D'Addario describe their XPND units as "the only pedalboard you'll ever need." Granted, a lot of companies might tell you that, but in this case it's not just hyperbolic marketing; the XPND 1 and its larger sibling, the XPND 2, use a patented telescoping design that allows users to adjust the length of the board, which means you can downsize or upsize to cater to whatever gig you might be playing. That's great news if you ever have new pedals to add — which, let's face it, you probably will — or if you suddenly decide to join a blues band that requires way less in terms of texture and color compared to your kaleidoscopic shoegaze project. The XPND 1 can hold one row of pedals and is expandable from 13.75" to 24.75" while the XPND 2 features two rows and is expandable from 17.5" to 31.75". A genius way to "add, subtract and rearrange how you want, when you want."

SCHMIDT ARRAY

250

schmidtarray.com, $480

If you're looking for the ultimate boutique option, German pedalboard connoisseurs Schmidt Array, established in 2012, are here to save the day. Their suitcase-style units come in all sorts of sizes and colors to accommodate just about every kind of player, with additional options for wood-stain and snakeskin paint finishes that will keep your favorite pedals out of harm's way while also looking unbelievably exquisite in the process. Their boards feature USB-rechargeable lights and intelligent in/out connector boxes to suit those with complex effect loop routing or multi-amp rigs, though understandably all of this comes at a cost. The company's current artist list includes Steve Rothery of Marillion, Floridian blues giant Josh Smith and English fusion virtuoso Tom Quayle — all of whom are known for their no-nonsense approach to gear and tone — which goes to show these products are about as captivating and cutting-edge as pedalboards can get.

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STRYMON V2 BLUESKY REVERBERATOR AND V2 EL CAPISTAN DTAPE ECHO

By Chris Gill

A FEW MONTHS back when Strymon announced new V2 versions of six of the company's most popular small-format pedals, the response from the guitar community was a mix of excitement and confusion (what else do you expect these days?). Many dedicated Strymon users who had happily owned the original versions for years were puzzled why they'd want an upgrade as the pedals sounded fine as is, while equal amounts of players anticipated new features that would unleash previously missing performance capabilities. Oddly enough for once, both sides were kind of right in that Strymon's new V2 pedals sound the same as their predecessors, but they also offer a significantly expanded range of performance and ergonomic features that make the upgrade totally worth it.

The Strymon V2 range currently consists of the blueSky Reverberator, Deco Tape Saturation & Doubletracker, DIG Dual Digital Delay, El Capistan dTape Echo, Flint Tremolo/Reverb and Lex Rotary. All six include the addition of MIDI, USB C, a discrete JFET input circuit and rear-panel Mono/Stereo switch. For this review we'll also focus on the individual new features of Strymon's popular blueSky and El Capistan pedals, first introduced way back in 2010.

FEATURES The addition of full-featured MIDI is a major upgrade for all of the V2 pedals. MIDI is accessed via the ¼-inch TRS Expression/MIDI jack to support functions like MIDI Control Change commands, MIDI clock sync and access to 300 preset locations. The knobs on the top panel can now send MIDI CC data. A USB-C

jack allows users to control the pedals from a computer and download future firmware upgrades. The discrete analog JFET input circuit enhances dynamic responsiveness and provides pristine low-noise performance, and a new ARM DSP chip significantly increases the processing power of each pedal while also enabling the addition of new algorithms.

Eagle-eyed observers noticed the addition of a sixth control knob to the top panel of the blueSky and El Capistan — actually all of the new V2 pedals except the Flint. A Shimmer knob was added to blueSky for the upgraded Shimmer parameter, while a Spring knob now appears on El Capistan for the spring reverb algorithm. A new spring reverb algorithm was created for blueSky, and a new Mod switch was added that allows users to select modulation depth for each of blueSky's reverb types.

The addition of an extra front panel knob means that the secondary modes for both pedals now offer an expanded range of control and functions. El Capistan's secondary functions now include Low End Contour, Tape Crinkle, Tape Bias, Boost/Cut, MIDI Clock Sync and Respond/Ignore MIDI Expression live edit functions and Input Level, Bypass Mode, Spillover Mode and EXP/MIDI jack configuration power up modes. The secondary modes for blueSky are the Boost/Cut and Respond/Ignore MIDI Expression live edit functions and the Input Level, Bypass Mode, Spillover Mode and EXP/MIDI jack configuration power up modes.

PERFORMANCE Overall, the character of the blueSky and El Capistan's effects remains nearly identical. El Capistan still delivers some of the best and most realistic tape echo effects available with delicious warmth and chewy texture, while blueSky's reverbs remain as pristine and three-dimensional as ever. However, there is a noticeable improvement in dynamic responsiveness and clarity — something that may not be noticeable when using compressed, highly distorted tones but becomes more evident when playing clean or lightly overdriven amp settings. There is definitely an improvement in sound quality, but the pedals still retain their original personality and flavor.

The new sixth control knobs are a welcome addition for players who like to tweak effects on the fly during live performance. I particularly liked being able to dial in spring reverb at will on the V2 El Capistan, and though the blueSky's Shimmer knob may not be something I'd personally adjust often, it was great to have that option at my fingertips. The MIDI implementation is a huge performance upgrade that's more than worth the added cost, if only for being able to save and access 300 presets instead of the previous pair that were only available via the optional Miniswitch Favorite function.

Although a V2 upgrade isn't 100 percent essential for previous blueSky and El Capistan owners, all of the new power and expanded functionality is very hard to resist.

CHEAT SHEET

STREET PRICE:
$379 (each)
MANUFACTURER:
Strymon, strymon.net

- Full-featured MIDI enables MIDI control change transmission and reception, MIDI clock sync, access to 300 presets and more.
- A Mono/Stereo switch on the rear panel allows users to instantly switch the TRS input jack between mono and stereo operation.
- A new discrete analog JFET input circuit enhances dynamic responsiveness and provides a pristine low-noise signal.
- Shimmer (blueSky) and Spring (El Capistan) knobs are added to the top panel to provide additional parameter control convenience during live performance.
- **THE BOTTOM LINE:** Providing the same beloved effects that made the original blueSky and El Capistan classics but with improved fidelity and the addition of full-featured MIDI, USB and other new features, the new Strymon V2 pedals are well worth the upgrade.

A Double Cut Above the Rest

D'ANGELICO DELUXE BRIGHTON LE SAGE

By Paul Riario

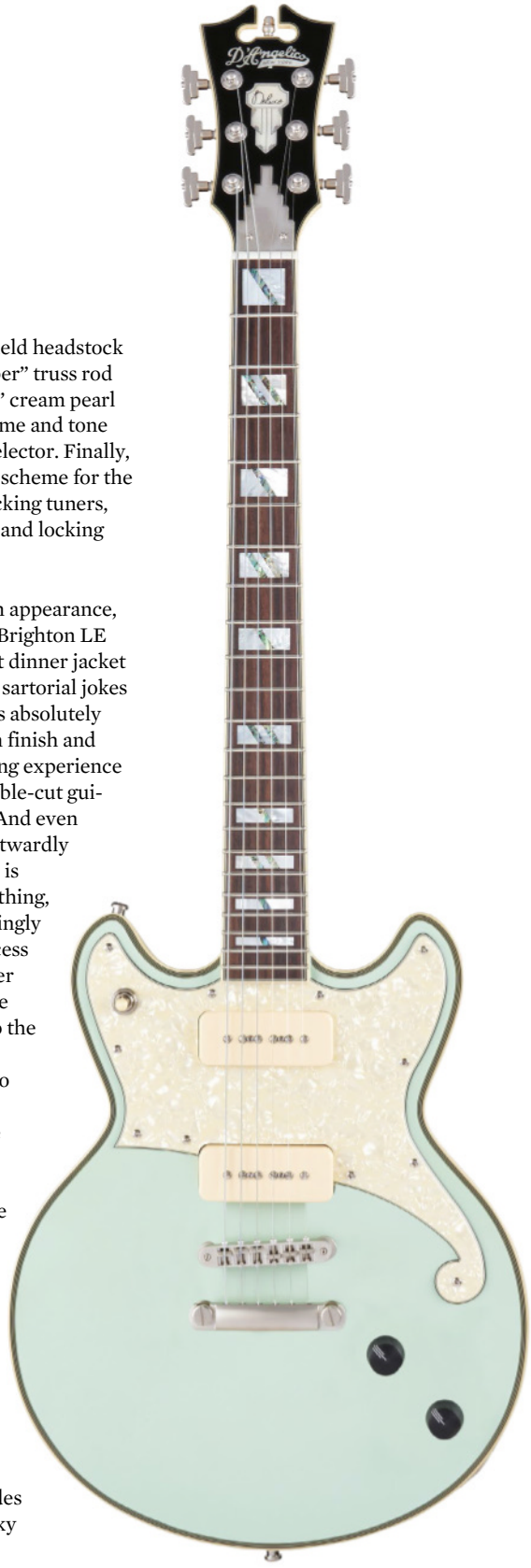
CHECK OUT ANY late-night talk or weekday morning show that features musical guests, and chances are you'll see one of the musicians playing a D'Angelico. Since the historic company roared back into the public eye more than a decade ago, D'Angelico has made great strides in reimagining its line of heritage archtops and contemporary semi-hollow and solid body designs, as well as putting their instruments in the hands of established and up-and-coming artists. Frankly, who could have predicted that these guitars — with their Art Deco-inspired appointments and jazzy signature headstocks — would become so prominent? Building upon their broad line of guitars, D'Angelico has been releasing a dedicated variety of Limited Edition models that display arresting finishes along with premium pickups and updated specs that promote these instruments from the rank and file. If there ever was a guitar that advances class and elegance, look no further than the striking D'Angelico Deluxe Brighton LE in a fetching Sage finish that's limited to 50 pieces worldwide.

FEATURES The best way to spot the difference between the three Deluxe Brighton LE guitars is by their colorways and pickups, and as mentioned above, only 50 of each will be available worldwide. The Sage and Sapphire models boast overwound Seymour Duncan Stack P90 noiseless pickups, while the Rust model sports Seymour Duncan Antiquity Retrospec humbuckers with coil-splitting push/pull tone knobs. The double cutaway Deluxe Brighton LE consists of a gloss-finished, solid alder body with a bounteous belly cut for comfort and a set-thru neck that joins the body at the 22nd fret. Speaking of which, the 3-piece neck is satin-finished with a slim C-profile, a rosewood fingerboard with mother-of-pearl and abalone split block inlays on a flat 14–inch radius, Tusq nut, 24.75–inch scale length and 22 Jescar medium/jumbo silver nickel frets. From head to toe, fancy D'Angelico ornamentations prevail, including 7-ply body binding, 3-ply neck and headstock binding, cupola headpin, mother-of-pearl "D'Angelico New York" headstock logo, mother-of-pearl "Deluxe" shield headstock inlay, "Aluminum Skyscraper" truss rod cover, 5-ply "F-Hole Style" cream pearl pickguard and ebony volume and tone knobs and 3-way pickup selector. Finally, satin nickel hardware is the scheme for the Grover 509 Super Rotomatic locking tuners, Tune-O-Matic bridge and tailpiece and locking strap buttons.

GUITAR WORLD GOLD AWARD PERFORMANCE

PERFORMANCE Based on its posh appearance, I feel guilty not pairing the Deluxe Brighton LE with a fine wine or donning a velvet dinner jacket when I play it. But all etiquette and sartorial jokes aside, the Deluxe Brighton LE looks absolutely magnetic with its muted Sage green finish and really does offer a heightened playing experience for anyone who favors a stylish double-cut guitar with an elongated neck design. And even though some might say the neck outwardly protrudes from the body, the guitar is only slightly neck-heavy, and if anything, you'll appreciate (like me) the invitingly slim neck carve and unimpeded access toward higher fret registers. In other words, you can comfortably play the pentatonic box from the 19th fret to the 22nd without a hitch.

There will always be players who favor humbuckers, and for that, the Deluxe Brighton LE Rust will more than satisfy, but for me, I do love this streamlined P90 version of the guitar, which reminds me of vintage Junior-style set-neck guitars. The noiseless stacked Seymour Duncan P90s offer a hotter single-coil bite with the bridge having a mid-heavy, high output that blankets chords and single notes with a honkin' snarl. Switching over to the middle toggle position smooths out both pickups for a brighter jangle, and flicking over to the neck P90 provides warm and beefier textures for plucky solos.



CHEAT SHEET

STREET PRICE: $1,699.99
MANUFACTURER: D'Angelico, dangelicoguitars.com

- The Deluxe Brighton LE Sage features noiseless Seymour Duncan Stacked P90s for bold and beefy single-coil tones.
- Part of a limited edition collection, the Deluxe Brighton LE Sage has a unique color, pickups and premium specs found nowhere else in D'Angelico's line.
- **THE BOTTOM LINE** The snazzy D'Angelico Deluxe Brighton LE Sage looks as sharp as a tux and slices with cutting tone, thanks to its Seymour Duncan P90s.

Encore Performance

JACKSON AMERICAN SERIES SOLOIST SL3

By Chris Gill

THE VERY FIRST time I saw a Jackson Soloist in a music store in the early Eighties I experienced a similar sensation to when I first encountered a Lamborghini in real life around the same time. All of my prior notions of what a familiar object could be, whether it was a guitar or car, were blown away by a new standard of sexy, aggressive styling and an almost fanatical devotion to speed. After holding the Jackson Soloist in my hands and playing a few licks, previous Fenders and Gibsons I played seemed like Chevys and Fords — functional and reliable perhaps, but lacking luxury and a distinct competitive edge.

Opening the case for the brand new Jackson American Series Soloist SL3, I was hit with a feeling of *déjà vu*. Before my eyes was a guitar that looked almost identical to the Jackson I discovered 40 years ago. However, even though shred-worthy guitar quality has improved dramatically since that time, I still felt a similar thrill when playing the new model. Made in the USA just like the original, the new American Series Soloist SL3 offers the same standards of quality as the original along with a few subtle upgrades that modern players will welcome.

FEATURES The Jackson American Series Soloist SL3 is made in Corona, California, only about 25 miles from where the original model was built. It features a graphite-reinforced three-piece maple neck-thru-body design with alder body wings. This design yields a sculpted heel-free transition between the neck and body, which, along with the deep treble bout cutaway provides unrestricted access to all 24 jumbo frets. Neck specs include a 25.5-inch scale length, 12-to-16-inch compound radius, 1.6875-inch nut width and unbound ebony fingerboard with Jackson's signature inverted "sharkfin" mother-of-pearl inlays.

The main modern upgrades lie in the electronics and hardware. Instead of Jackson-brand pickups, the pickups come courtesy of Seymour Duncan and consist of a JB TB-4 bridge humbucker, Flat Strat SSL-6 RWQRP middle single-coil and Flat Strat SSL-6 neck single-coil. Instead of mini on/off switches for each pickup, a five-position blade pickup selector switch provides bridge/bridge outer coil and middle/neck and bridge inner coil/neck and middle/neck settings, while the master volume and master tone knobs remain true to the original design. A Floyd Rose 1500 Series double-locking tremolo is standard (the original usually had a Kahler or occasionally a Floyd); tuners are Gotoh MG-T Locking models; and all of the hardware has a matte black finish. Other upgrades include Luminlay side dot markers and a truss rod adjustment wheel located above the 24th fret.

PERFORMANCE When playing the American Series Soloist, 40 years of guitar-making experience and refinement is evident compared to the original model. Here, the fretboard edges are smoothly rounded off to provide silky comfort and the slim, flat C-shape neck profile facilitates lightning-fast runs. A deep-routed cavity allows players to raise pitch significantly with the Floyd Rose. Playability, comfort and performance are all simply top notch.

The pickup settings accessed via the blade switch make this Soloist a super Strat with a capital "S," delivering a satisfying variety of dazzling single-coil tones in addition to the assertive midrange roar of the Duncan JB bridge humbucker. The reverse wound middle pickup eliminates noise when dual single-coil settings are selected, and all of the single-coil settings sound brilliant and sparkling. While the Soloist excels at metal tones, it can also hang with blues, country, funk, fusion, progressive or really any style of music where humbucking and single-coil tones are equally welcome.

No mere trip down memory lane, the American Series Soloist proves that high performance and quality never goes out of style.

CHEAT SHEET

STREET PRICE: $2,499.99 (Slime Green finish); $2,599.99 (Gloss Black, Platinum Pearl or Riviera Blue finish)
MANUFACTURER: Jackson Guitars, jacksonguitars.com

- Pickups consist of Seymour Duncan JB bridge humbucker and Flat Strat SSL-6 middle and neck single-coils with a five-position blade selector switch.

- Modern upgrades include a deep-routed cavity for the Floyd Rose 1500 Series vibrato and truss rod adjustment wheel above the 24th fret.

- **THE BOTTOM LINE**
The return of a good old made-in-the-USA Jackson Soloist is a welcome development made even better by modern upgrades that provide improved playability and tonal versatility.

Buzz Bin
Steel Panther 1987 Pedal

THE YEAR 1987 brings to mind certain memories for me: I had hair down to my waist; a Superstrat with one humbucker and a Floyd Rose; a kickin' hair metal band; Def Leppard, Whitesnake and Guns N' Roses blaring from my speakers and well, come to think of it, not much else. Don't get me wrong, it was an adventurously fun chapter of my youth but also a time of self-reflection, as in, how much longer will this "nothin' but a good time" last? All the same, it didn't matter. At some point, I moved on, but for others, the party is still raging. Take, for example, hair metal thespians Steel Panther, who have managed to continually keep the music and debauchery of the Sunset Strip alive and well in their live shows and albums. So much so, it's surprising that the band hasn't packaged more of itself as a brand rather than an act. Well, hold up, not so fast! Steel Panther's lead maestro, Satchel, has already tapped that entrepreneurial spirit by releasing an anodyne guitar pedal dubbed the 1987 Pedal that — mercifully — isn't as controversial as his previously nicknamed ones. Despite that, the 1987 Pedal is an imitative 2-in-1 stompbox with separate delay and distortion, and IMHO, part novelty and nostalgia coated in a sleaze metal paint job.

Finding specs to glean from the 1987 pedal is much like scouring for tickets to a Taylor Swift concert; it's largely unavailable. The only thing online is, "With the grit of 100 chainsaws and the ability to repeat itself more than that super-stoned dude from Chemistry class, it is truly the ultimate badass accessory... next to eyeliner." Okay, got it, but like, no one spitballed "Slippery When Wet" on the whiteboard for engaging the delay? At any rate, the 1987 Pedal is uncomplicated and easy to figure out — like a Faster Pussycat song. Two rows of knobs govern the delay (level, feedback and delay) on top, and distortion (level, tone and gain) on the bottom. And thankfully, two footswitches allow you to turn each effect on or off separately, or be used together (which undoubtedly, most players will be doing). Finally, the 1987 is powered only with a 9-volt adapter.

I wanted to say the pedal summons "arena-like" tones, but it's mostly a two-trick pony that stays in its own lane — and there's nothing wrong with that. The distortion's range is as narrow as a "devil horns" hand gesture — from thick and tight hot-rodded crunch to hi-gain sizzle and zero nuance — but that's expected here. The delay is more of an echo that colors the tone of the pedal once you trigger it, and as a standalone delay, it's passable. It's the kinda echo you'd want on an extended power ballad solo. Just the same, it's a decent pedal, and in some respects, above average, but allow me to sum this up in a gentle way that most hair metal aficionados will understand and appreciate: the 1987 Pedal is kind of like a double bill of Poison and Winger — there are parts of its sound I really like, but I know there are better bands out there. And for many, it's still a good time.
— *Paul Riario*

STREET PRICE: $198.70 (See what they did there?)
MANUFACTURER: Steel Panther Rocks, steelpantherrocks.com

IN DEEP
by Andy Aledort

For video of this lesson, go to guitarworld.com/march2023

OBLIQUE WORKOUT

Getting the most from oblique bends, part 1

GUITAR PLAYERS ARE well aware that three of the most reliable techniques for creating expressive solos are string bending, vibrato and the combination of bending with vibrato. One exceptionally cool and useful bending technique is what's known as an *oblique bend*. This is where you play two notes on two different strings and bend one while the other remains unbent.

A basic example of an oblique bend is a unison bend, which is performed by bending a note on one string up to match the pitch of an unbent note on the next higher string. For example, fret a D note with your ring finger on the G string's 7th and an E note with your index finger on the B string's 5th fret; sound the two notes then proceed to bend the D note up a whole step to E.

Oblique bends work in the same way but with different pitches sounded on each of the strings utilized. **FIGURE 1**, bar 1, illustrates an oblique bend built from a D note, fretted with the ring finger at the 7th fret on the G string, bent up one whole step to E, sounded simultaneously with a G note, fretted with the pinkie on the B string's 8th fret. Within the context of this lesson, all examples are played over an implied A7 chord. Bar 2 of **FIGURE 1** continues a typical blues-type phrase played over A7.

In **FIGURE 2**, the two strings are sounded together, starting with a whole-step bend, release and re-bend of the D note on the G string while the high G note on the B string is played along with it. A technique Jimi Hendrix used often was to begin with the oblique bend and then repeatedly release the bend into a pull-off, and then cycle that figure over and over, as demonstrated in **FIGURE 3**. Another twist is to follow the release of the bend on the G string with an A root note on the D string's 7th fret, after which C, G string/5th fret, is hammered up one whole step to D and then the phrase is repeated, as shown in **FIGURE 4**. In this example, the notes of the oblique bend are sounded in succession instead of together. **FIGURE 5** illustrates this Hendrix-type phrase played in a repeating fashion.

Another interesting variation is to begin with a whole-step pre-bend from D to E on the G string while simultaneously sounding the high G note above it, as illustrated in **FIGURE 6**.

Guitarists such as Johnny Winter and Eric Clapton often create syncopated rhythms with oblique bends by sounding the bent note first then repeatedly picking the unbent note on the higher string. This is shown in **FIGURE 7**. After bending D to E on the G string, the high G note on the B string is repeatedly picked either four or two times in alternating fashion through bars 1 and 2, and the phrase then resolves with a T-Bone/Jimi/Eric/SRV-type lick.

FIG. 1 (A7)

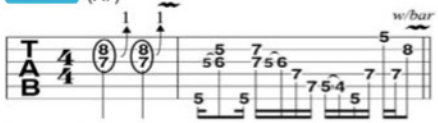


FIG. 2 (A7)

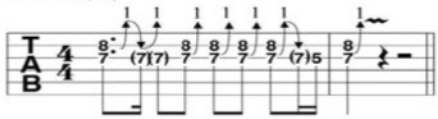
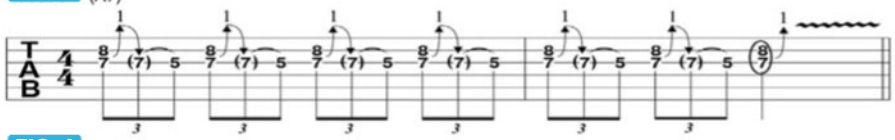



FIG. 3 (A7)



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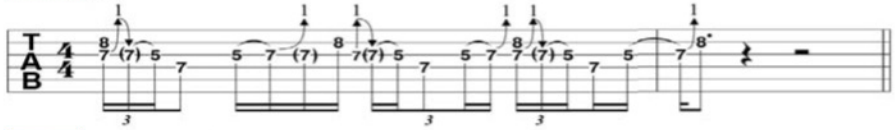


FIG. 5 (A7)

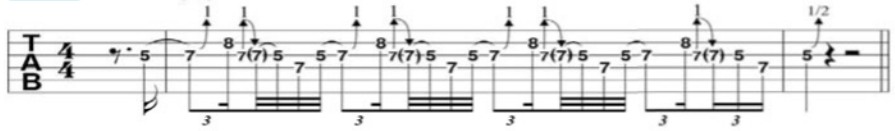


FIG. 6 (A7)

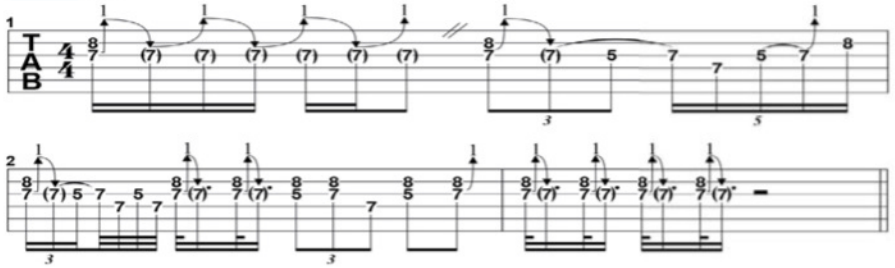
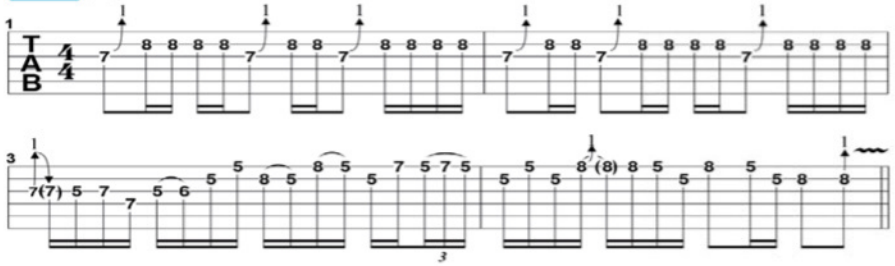


FIG. 7 (A7)



***GW* associate editor Andy Aledort is recognized worldwide for his vast contributions to guitar instruction, via his many best-selling instructional DVDs, transcription books and online lessons. His new album, *Light of Love*, is available from andyaledort.com and all streaming services.**

ALISON HASBACH

TALES FROM NERDVILLE

by Joe Bonamassa

For video of this lesson, go to guitarworld.com/march2023

WINO MAN

A look at Pee Wee Crayton's blues classic, "Win-o"

AS MENTIONED PREVIOUSLY, I'm currently recording a 20th anniversary follow-up to my 2003 album, *Blues Deluxe*, which will be titled, appropriately, *Blues Deluxe, Vol. 2*. One of the songs we cut for this record is a cover of Pee Wee Crayton's "Win-O." I love that song! In my humble opinion, Crayton is one of the most underrated bluesmen of the 20th century. He did most of his recording in the 1950s, and "Win-O" was recorded in 1954 and released on Imperial Records.

Pee Wee had a great guitar, one that now finds its home in the blues museum down in Memphis. It's a Fiesta Red Fender Stratocaster with a gold pickguard, made in 1955. When we cut our version of the song, we approached it like the original recording but with a bit of a Paul Butterfield Blues band-type of spin on it.

The song starts off quietly and unassuming, along the lines of **FIGURE 1**. Playing in the key of C, I begin with a pickup of a D♭9 chord into the C9 played on the downbeat of bar 1, followed by a simple lick based on the C minor pentatonic scale (C, E♭, F, G, B♭) and then a similar half-step chord shift, down from the flatted 5th, G♭9, to the 4th, F9.

After the third verse, I go straight into a punchy, in-your-face approach, as shown in **FIGURE 2**. This is akin to what I think Mike Bloomfield might have done with the tune if he'd recorded it with the Butterfield band.

All the licks in this example are based on the C blues scale (C, E♭, F, G♭, G, B♭), and I begin in an Albert King-like style by hitting the 5th, G, followed by a heavily vibrato-ed C root note, fretted with the ring finger (3). This finger is also used to bend F up a whole step to G at the start of bar 1. But notice that, after fretting the E♭ (1st string/11th fret) with my index finger (1), I move that finger up to fret F at the 13th fret, in order to use my ring finger to perform the Albert-style overbends on E♭, on the B string's 16th fret.

I hang around in 13th position through the first three beats of bar 2 then shift down to 8th position on beat 4 and remain there until I move back up to 11th position in the final bar.

One thing I always loved about Mike Bloomfield was that, no matter how wild he got, he'd always bring it home by the end of the solo with a simple lick, almost as if it were a cue for the band. As shown in **FIGURE 3**, coming off the V (five) chord, G7, I jump up to 15th position for some fast repeating phrases that stick with C minor pentatonic, working my way down to 13th position at the end of bar 3 and then into lower positions by the end of the example, to set up the return to the final verse section.

It was fun to play a Les Paul on a song that was originally recorded on a Strat. I took some artistic license and added my own twists here and there. The most important thing about recording any cover is to be creative. We already have the original, so make it your own!

FIG. 1

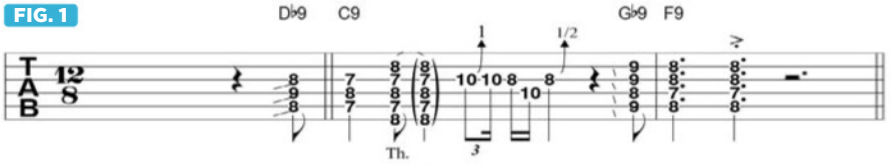


FIG. 2

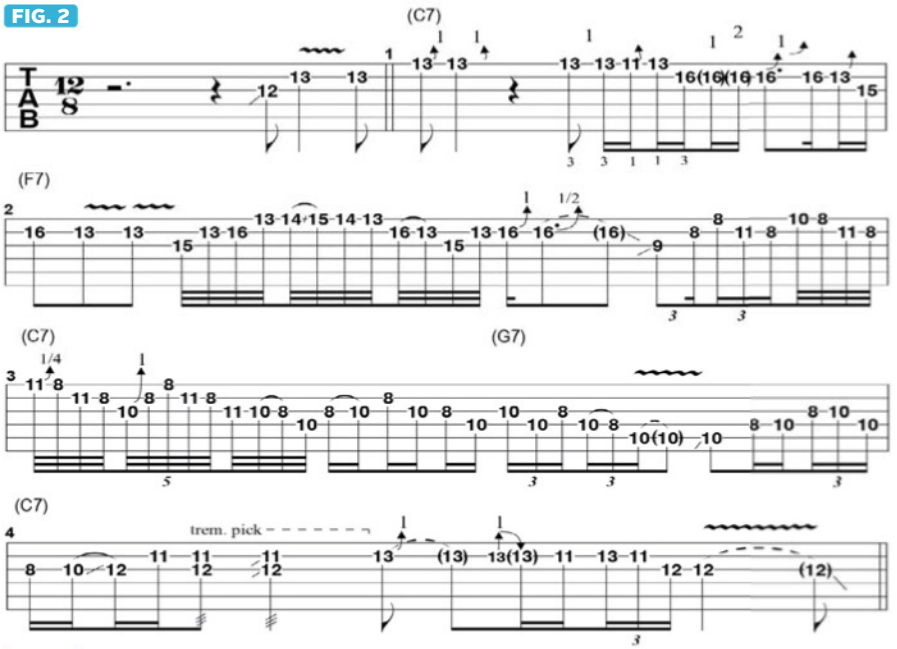
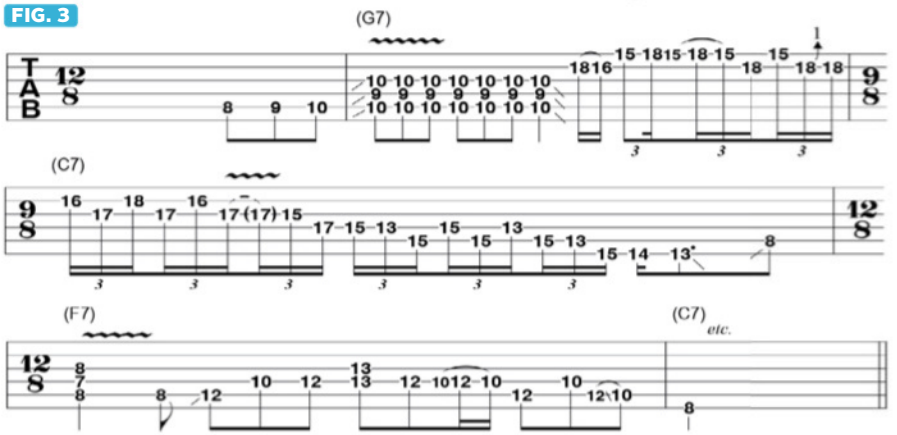


FIG. 3



Joe Bonamassa is one of the world's most popular blues-rock guitarists — not to mention a top producer and *de facto* ambassador of the blues.

ELEANOR JANE

MELODIC MUSE

by Andy Timmons

For video of this lesson, go to guitarworld.com/march2023

THE NEXT DAY

How to play "That Day Came," part 2

LAST MONTH, WE began our look into the song "That Day Came," released originally on my 2016 album, *Theme from a Perfect World*. "That Day Came" is performed in a chord-melody style, which means that individual melody notes are supported with additional notes, such as lower bass notes, chords or two-note dyads, which serve to fill out the harmony, making the implied chord progression of the song clear to the listener.

Last month, we looked at the first eight bars of the song, so let's pick up the composition from bar 9 and continue through the next eight bars, up to bar 16.

FIGURE 1 illustrates the second eight bars of the initial verse section of "That Day Came," starting on a somewhat unusual B♭(♯11) chord.

This second half of the chord-melody begins with a modulation from the key of F♯ minor to F major at this point. As shown in **FIGURE 2**, the 5th of A major, E, is sustained into a B♭ root note and its corresponding major 3rd, D. Over B♭, this E note functions as the ♯11 (sharp 11), or ♯4. The resulting harmonic tonality is that of the B♭ Lydian mode (B♭, C, D, E, F, G, A).

B♭(♯11) is a great chord that holds a lot of tension and sets up the chordal resolution to the subsequent chord, Gm. **FIGURE 3** illustrates the melodic line that is played over B♭(♯11), which works its way up to a high B♭ note that serves as the minor 3rd of Gm. In the composition, the Gm is followed by our "destination" chord, F major.

When I perform the song live, my bass player covers the root notes of the chords for me so that I can play the melody only. But here in this "solo guitar" presentation, I add a low G bass note on the 5th string's 10th fret, below the high B♭ note, so that the harmony is clearly apparent. Additionally, the fret-hand fingers sounding the melody are chosen in order to best facilitate the incorporation of the root notes sounded on lower strings.

As the melody notes here often function as the 3rd of each given chord in the progression, the implied harmony is relatively clear, even without the lower root notes added. But, as shown in **FIGURE 4**, I can reference all of the chords in a given key, such as F major, with the use of 10th intervals, or 10th, which is a two-note dyad that places the root note as the lower pitch and the 3rd above it, displaced up an octave.

FIGURE 5 illustrates the subsequence melodic line I play over the F major resolution chord, which is followed by a melodic line that carries us back up to a restatement of B♭(♯11). As our new "home key" of F major has now been established, I can derive these melodic lines from the notes of F major pentatonic, as shown in **FIGURE 6**.

FIG. 1

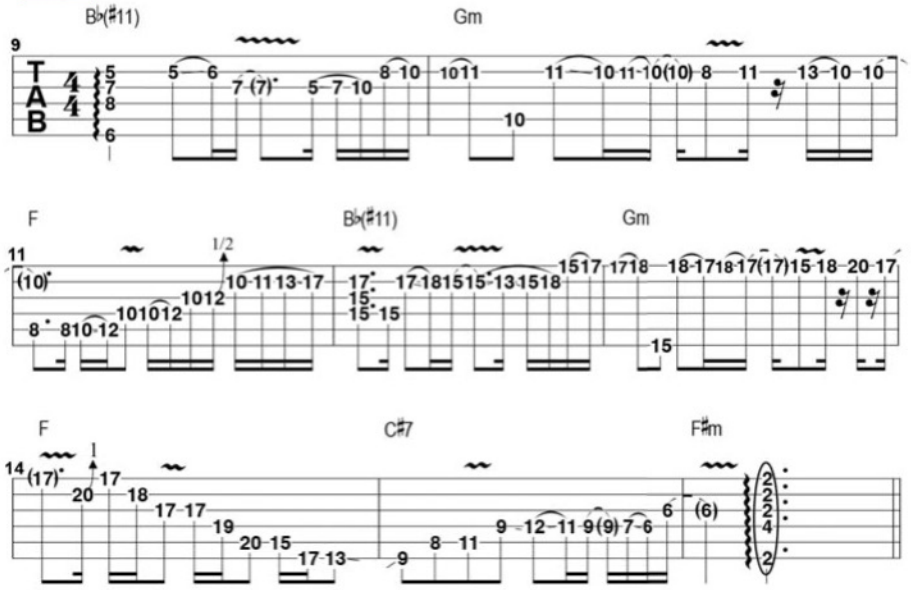


FIG. 2

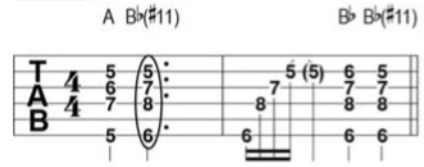


FIG. 3

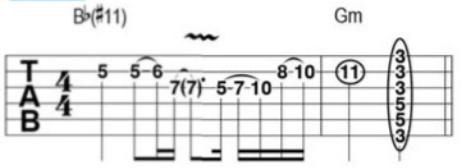


FIG. 4

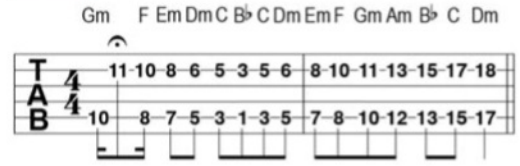


FIG. 5

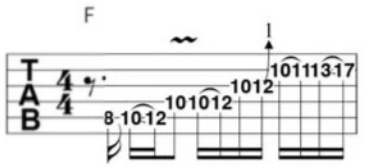
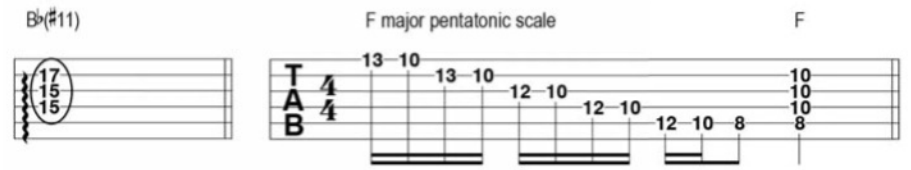


FIG. 6



Andy Timmons is a world-renowned guitarist known for his work with the Andy Timmons Band, Danger Danger and Simon Phillips. His new album, *Electric Truth*, is out now. Visit andytimmons.com and guitarxperience.net to check out his recordings and many instructional releases.

SIMONE CECHETTI

LIVE FROM FLAT V

by Josh Smith

For video of this lesson, go to guitarworld.com/march2023

BLUE AND FUNKY

How to play "Pusher," part 1

THIS MONTH, I'D like to cover my song "Pusher," which I had originally recorded for my 2014 album, *Over Your Head*, but I'd really like to talk about the version I include on my new album, *Live at the Spud*. "Pusher" is a cool, syncopated 12-bar blues tune in the key of G, and it features some interesting twists and turns along the way. When I play this song live, I do my best to take advantage of the many different ways to improvise on the tune, and that's what we will get into over the next few columns.

The main theme of the song is illustrated in **FIGURE 1**. Playing in straight $\frac{4}{4}$ time against a funky groove, I begin with a hammer-on from F to G on the D string, which is sounded along with the open G string. As I often do, I'm using some hybrid picking here, picking the D string with the pick while simultaneously fingerpicking the G string. This theme and the improvised phrases that I use to fill in the spaces between the primary parts are based on the G blues scale (G, B♭, C, D♭, D, F).

On the upbeat of beat 2, I play a two-note chord voicing that consists of the notes E and B♭. The B♭ is bent up a half step to B, so the resulting sound reflects the harmony of a G6 chord (G, B, D, E). This is followed in bar 2 by a repeatedly picked F note, articulated in a 16th-note syncopation, which I like to vary as the song progresses. Bar 3 begins the same way as bar 1, and at the end of bar 3 into bar 4 I offer a swinging, bluesy improvised phrase that combines double-stops 6ths and 3rds and includes a reverse rake, or upstroke sweep, for which the pick is dragged upward across the strings.

FIGURE 2 demonstrates how this lick is integrated across the full 12-bar progression. The opening two-bar phrase is played twice, across bars 1-4, bars 5 and 6 shift to the IV (four) chord, C7, and bars 7 and 8 rephrase the primary G7 figure. Bars 9 and 10 move to the V (five) chord, D7, and the IV (four) chord, C7, respectively, and the form closes out in bars 11 and 12 with a return to the I (one) G7, followed by a turnaround on the V (five) chord, D7 across the last two beats of bar 12.

FIG. 1

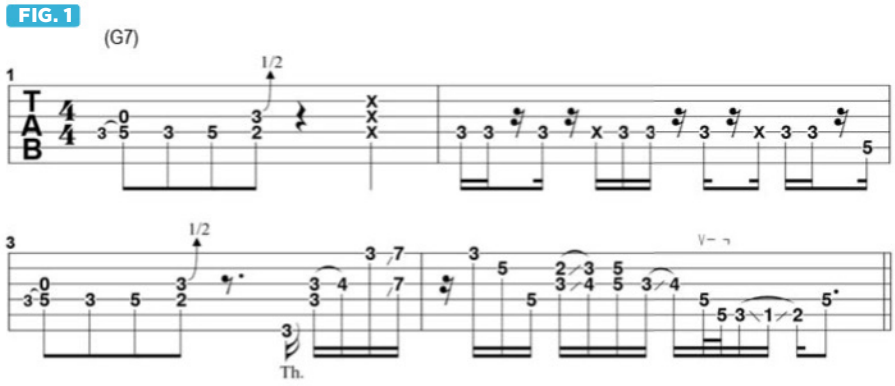
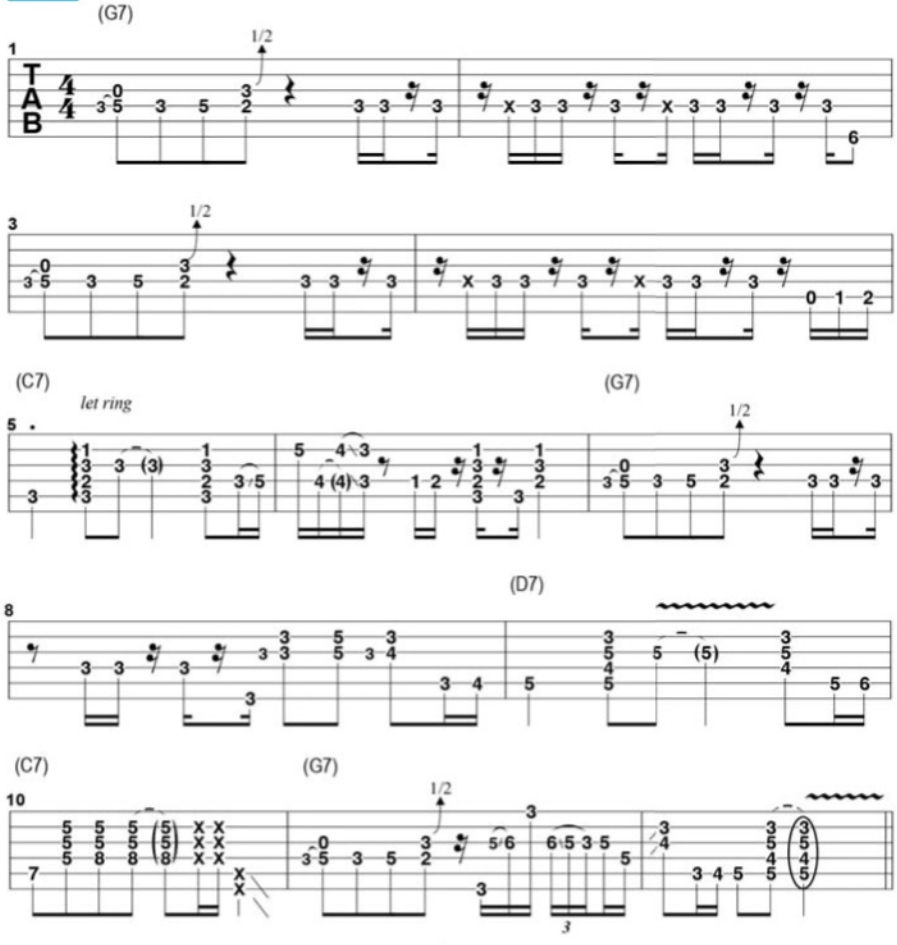


FIG. 2

Notice that, when I move to C7 in bar 10, I opted for a C7/E voicing, with the E bass note played on the 5th string's 7th fret and the ♭7, B♭, added at the 8th fret on the 4th string. When I go back to the main theme in bar 11, I set up the switch to D7 with a nice bluesy phrase based on the G7 dominant sound.

Next month we'll look at approaches to soloing over this tune. See you then!

Josh Smith is a highly respected blues-country-jazz master and all-around tone wizard (not to mention an effective instructor). His new album, 2022's *Bird of Passage*, is out now. For more info, check out joshsmithguitar.com.

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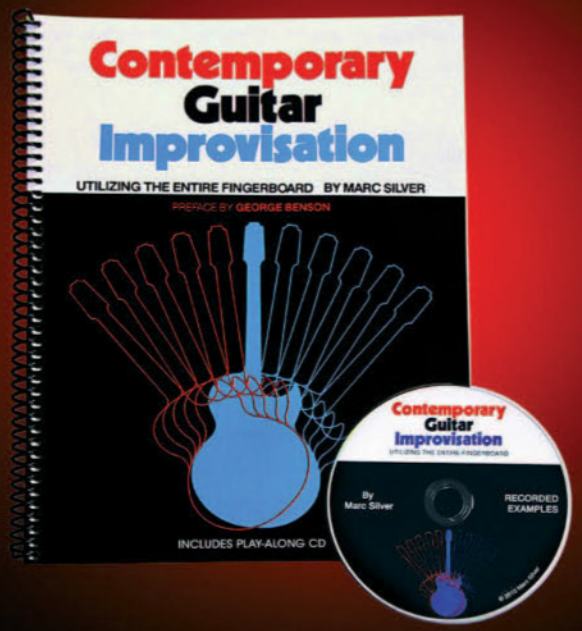

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Performance Notes

HOW TO PLAY THIS MONTH'S SONGS **By Jimmy Brown**

"THE DYING SONG (TIME TO SING)"
Slipknot

SLIPKNOT GUITARISTS JIM Root and Mick Thomson unleash a fierce barrage of their band's signature pummeling metal riffs on this up-tempo juggernaut. Using drop-D tuning, transposed down one and one half steps — what many refer to as "drop-B" tuning (low to high: B, F♯, B, E, G♯, C♯) — the masked marauders of metal strike hard from the get go, showing no mercy as they lay down a sinister low-register intro riff built around the open 6th string, which sets the stage for the song's 1st verse that commences at section C.

When playing these riffs, and all those that follow, you must downpick all the non-legato eighth notes, meaning all those that are not articulated with a pull-off, hammer-on or finger slide. This is demanding to do at the song's brisk tempo (190 bpm), but it's the only way to achieve the desired aggressive, intense attack. You will, of course, need to use alternate (down-up) picking for all the eighth-note triplets and 16th-note "gallops," which would be impossible for most humans to downpick. Be sure to use pick-hand palm muting (P.M.) where indicated throughout the arrangement to keep the various single-note riffs and shifting power chords sounding and feeling tight and clear. Notice, however, that certain passages are to be played "wide open," with no palm muting, such as at the beginning of the chorus (section F) and the backing single-note riff played during the guitar solo and 2nd verse (sections J and L, respectively). These unmuted parts provide an effective dynamic contrast to the palm-muted riffs, contributing to the song's musicality.

Midway through the 2nd verse, at bar 96, Root and Thomson expand the aforementioned single-note riff to two-note, root-5th power chords, taking advantage of the ability that the tuning affords one to form each chord by conveniently barring a single finger across the bottom two strings. Nevertheless, this fast-moving riff is tricky to play cleanly. The key is to use each open D5 chord as an opportunity to quickly shift your fret-hand ring finger (3) up and down the neck and "bounce" it off the open strings.

"NOT ALONE"
Lari Basilio

WITH THIS GORGEOUSLY sophisticated, jazz/r&b-flavored instrumental, Brazilian guitarist Lario Basilio epitomizes artistry, soulfulness and good taste, using her musical and technical chops for good and in a most judicious way, with a mature and sublimely pleasing tone and touch.

Lari begins the piece alone, with her S-style electric guitar in drop-D tuning and treated with some light overdrive and dreamy digital reverb and delay effects. The guitarist performs this opening section fingerstyle, playing an arpeggio-based melody and occasionally pairing a melody note with a low bass note or sparsely voiced chord, effectively and economically implying a progression. Notice how the guitarist expressively employs legato finger slides, hammer-ons and pull-offs and adds some gentle bar vibrato to her held notes and chords.

There's a wide, four-fret stretch in bar 13, which isn't too terribly difficult to perform, once you get acquainted with the passage and anticipate it, rotating your wrist as needed. Take care to pull-off cleanly from your 4th finger (14th fret) to your 2nd finger (12th fret) while holding the G bass note.

Following the brief dramatic pause in bar 16, Lari switches to playing with a pick for the following section (section B), where the band enters. Notice her extensive use of Andy Timmons-like finger slides here, with both single notes and perfect-4ths double-stops. Be sure to use individual fingertips to fret the sliding 4ths here, as opposed to barring them, which wouldn't facilitate the nimble, precise slides in bar 20 as well.

Lari's lead playing becomes busier as the arrangement unfolds, as she masterfully crafts quick, smooth double-time phrases over the groove, using combinations of alternate picking, legato articulations and a few small pick sweeps, plus some wailing bends and an occasional whammy bar dip.

Another interesting and potentially challenging aspect of playing this tune is fretting some of the unusual drop-D chord voicings at sections D, G and H. Be sure to use the fingerings illustrated in the frames at the beginning of the transcription.

"SPIRIT IN THE SKY"
Norman Greenbaum

THIS FUN, UPLIFTING folk-rock hit from late 1969 kicks off with guitarist-songwriter Norman Greenbaum fingerpicking, on his Fender Telecaster, a catchy, swampy, John Lee Hooker-style riff in A, using a dark, "sagging" fuzz tone produced by an overdrive circuit that was custom-built directly into his guitar, and with his tone control rolled off.

Another part of the sound of this signature riff has to do with the way it's played, specifically with the use of thumbpicking on the bottom two strings, accented notes (indicated by the symbol >), fret-hand-muted "ghost notes" (indicated by Xs), pick-hand palm muting (P.M.), which muffles the attack of a note and quickens its decay, and staccato (short, clipped) articulations (indicated by small black dots). Fret the A note on the D string's 7th fret with your pinkie, quickly relaxing its grip on the string immediately after picking the note to achieve each staccato articulation. You can then use your index finger to fret the A-string notes.

The song's signature lead guitar "beeps," featured in bars 13-15, 27-32 and elsewhere, were performed by guitarist Russell DaShiell on his Gibson SG, plugged into a Marshall model 1959 SLP "Plexi" amp, with a homemade overdrive/boost pedal in between. DaShiell explains how to recreate the procedure he cleverly used to produce the "stuttering" effect, which is akin to employing a "killswitch" to momentarily mute a guitar's sound: "Using a two-pickup Gibson, set your neck pickup volume to zero and bridge pickup volume to max, with the pickup selector switch in the middle position. (With Gibson wiring, this gives you silence in the middle position). Do a string bend, pick the B and high E strings together with one hit, then use the pickup switch to kick in the bridge pickup in a triplet rhythm as you release the bend." In each instance, you pre-bend the B string, strike the strings on the first beat then repeatedly "open the gate" to let the sound come through as you gradually release the bend. Due to the sound being "off," the initial attack happens in silence, and the notes are "articulated" by repeatedly turning on the bridge pickup.

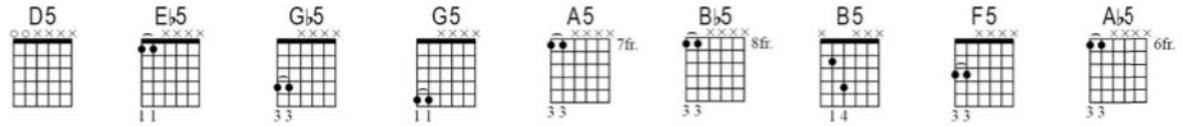
"THE DYING SONG (TIME TO SING)"

Slipknot

As heard on **THE END, SO FAR**

Words and Music by SLIPKNOT • *Transcribed by* JEFF PERRIN

All guitars are in Drop-D tuning, down one and one half steps, also known as "Drop-B" tuning (low to high: B, F♯, B, E, G♯, C♯).
Bass tuning (low to high: B, F♯, B, E).
All music sounds one and one half steps lower than written.



A **Intro** (0:00)

Moderately Fast ♩ = 190

Put your hands into the water Let your mouth go sick and dry Put your
life into your death now Let them sing until you die

N.C.

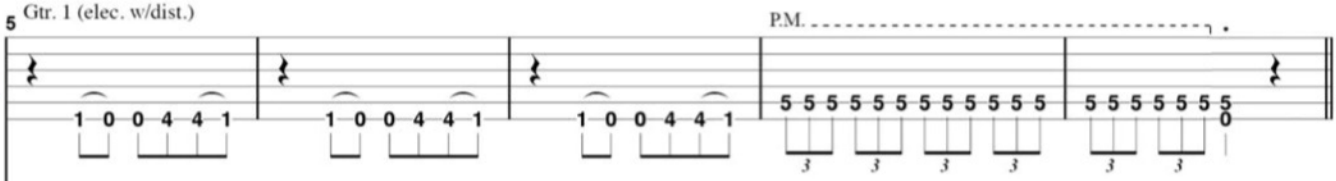
1 *(synth production effect)*

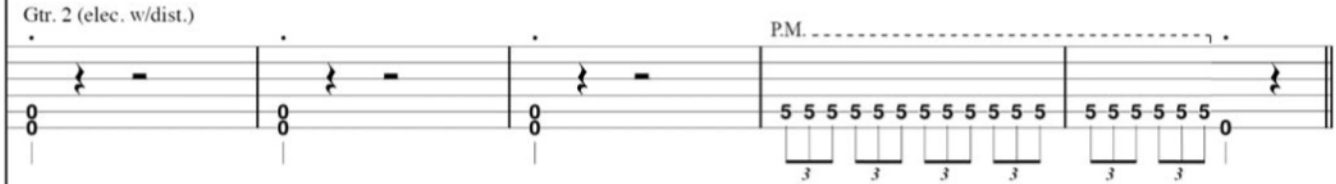
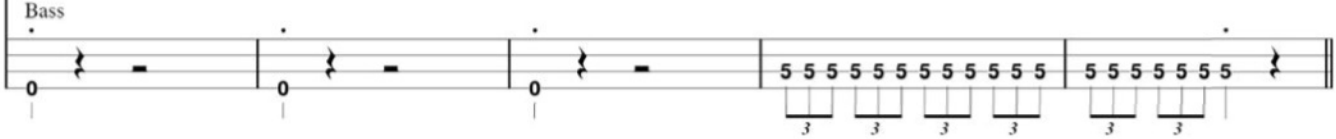
B (0:10)

Die die die Yeah

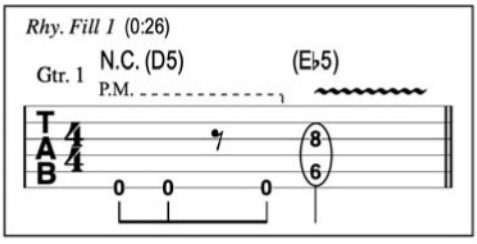
D5

5 Gtr. 1 (elec. w/dist.) P.M.



Gtr. 2 (elec. w/dist.) P.M.

Bass

Rhy. Fill 1 (0:26)

Gtr. 1 N.C. (D5) (E♭5)
P.M.



"THE DYING SONG (TIME TO SING)"
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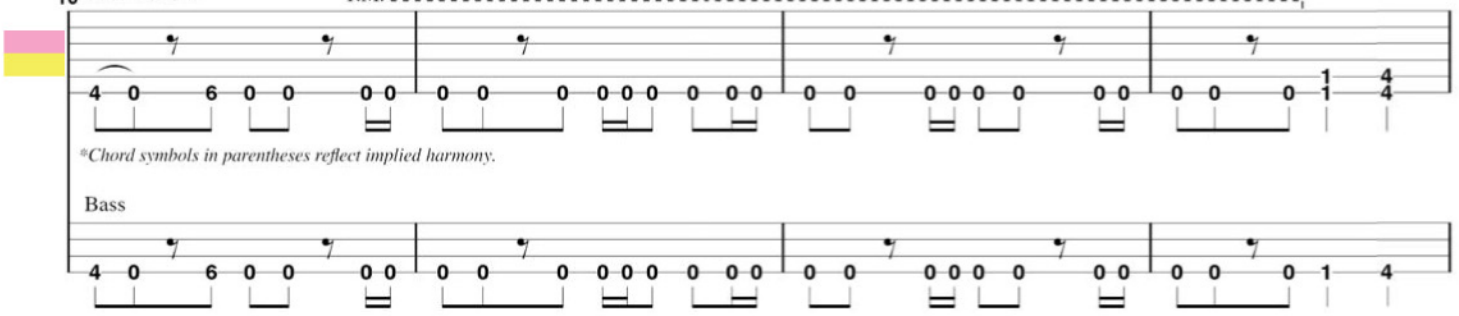
C **1st Verse** (0:17)

Radical rather than rhetorical babble like an oracle Why am I always in your debt

*(G♭5) (D5) (A♭5) (D5) E♭5 G♭5

10 Gtrs. 1 and 2 P.M.



*Chord symbols in parentheses reflect implied harmony.

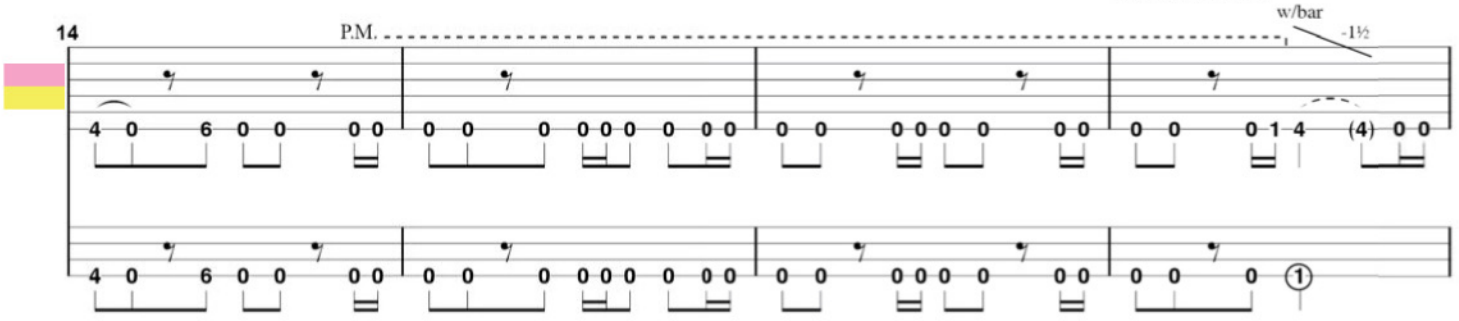
Bass

Father and the son and the holy ghost Communist comatose show me all the wagers are a bet The

(G♭5) (D5) (A♭5) (D5) (E♭5)

Gtr. 1 plays Rhy. Fill 1 (see below bar 6)

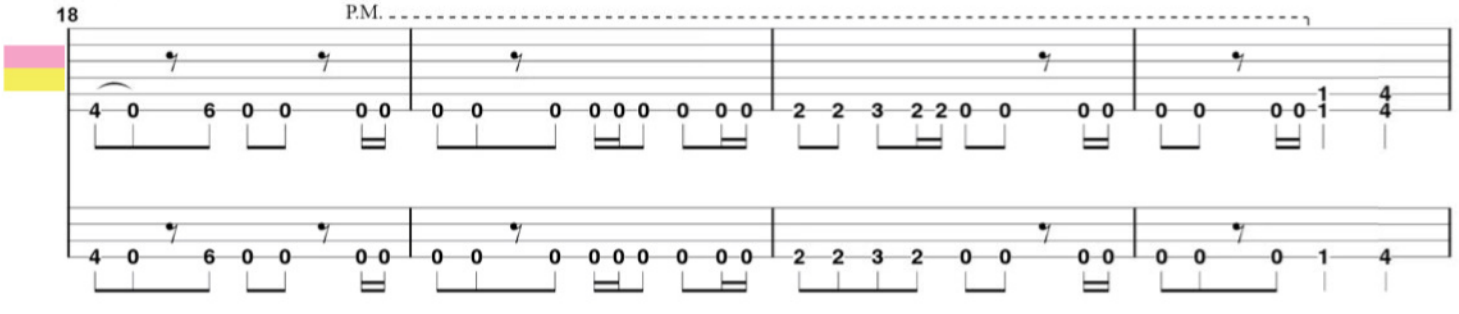
14 P.M. w/bar -1½



middle of a nuclear winter is a modern achievement of the retro apocalyptic horde

(G♭5) (D5) (A♭5) (D5) (E5) (F5) (E5) (D5) E♭5 G♭5

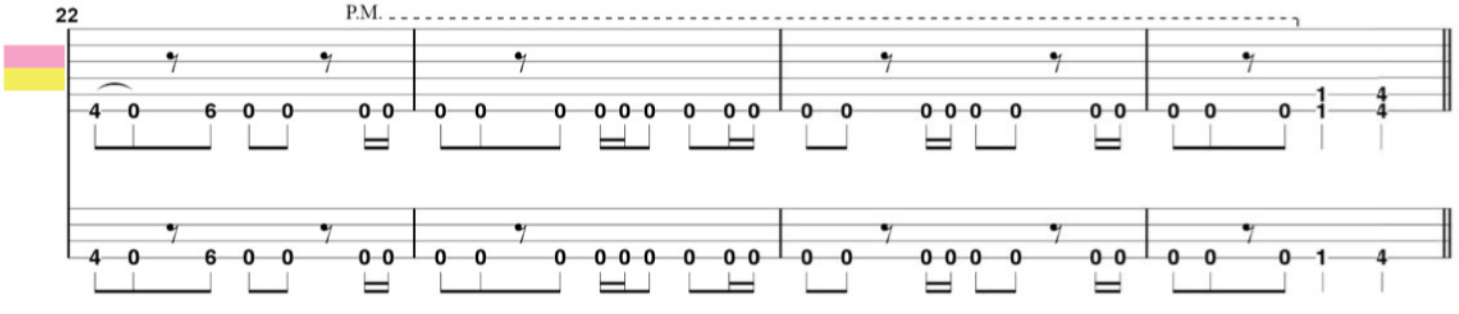
18 P.M.



Satan You must be mistaken there are no more satans Only the bosses on the board Forget

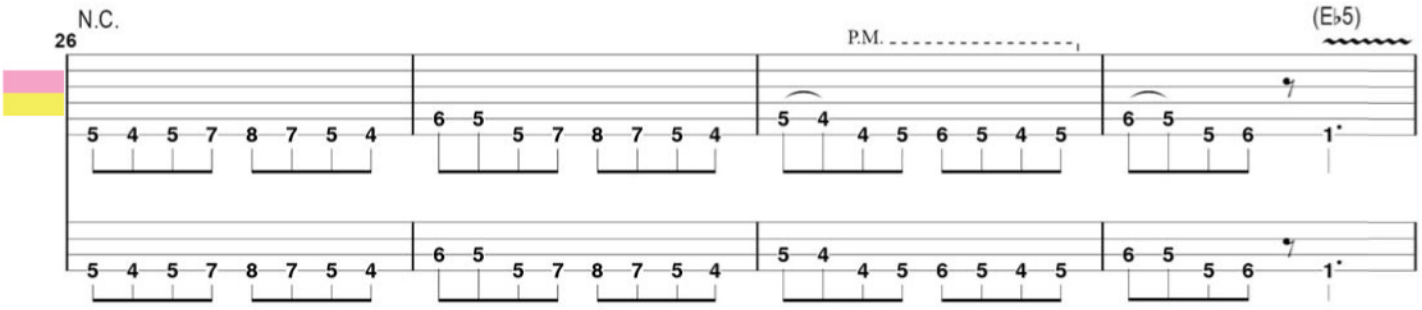
(G♭5) (D5) (A♭5) (D5) E♭5 G♭5

22 P.M.

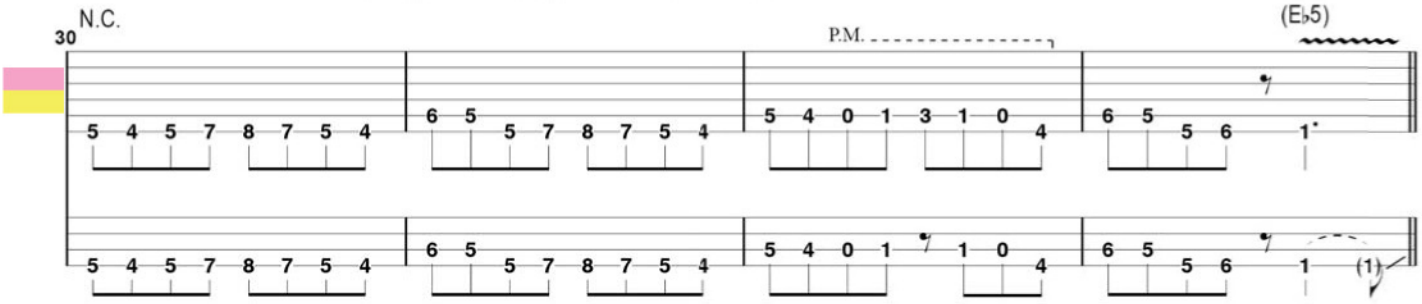


D (0:37)

deny ignore Nice try it's you Regret

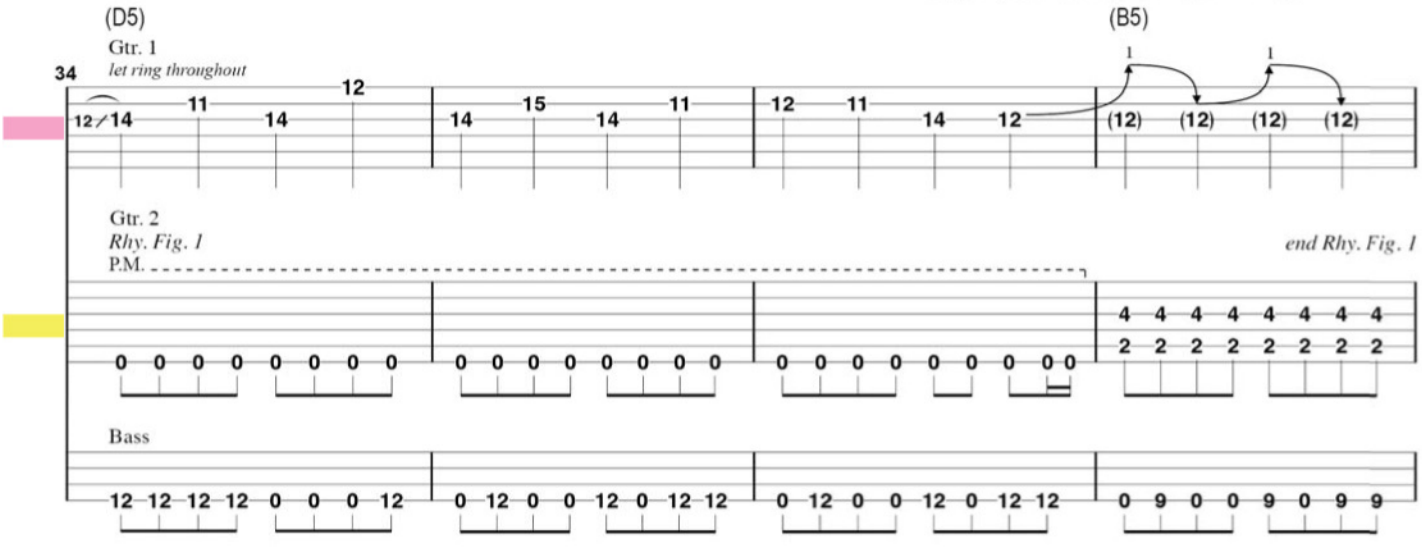


rely remorse inside of you Yeah

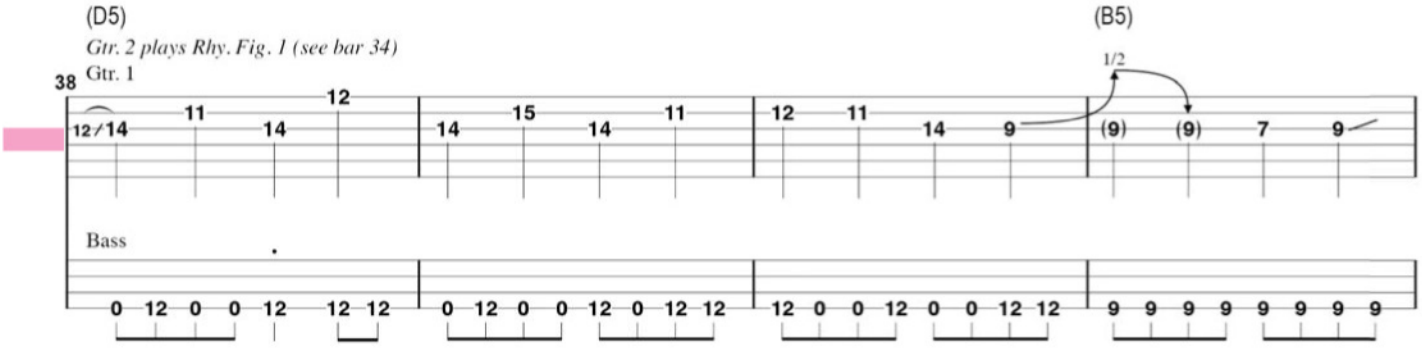


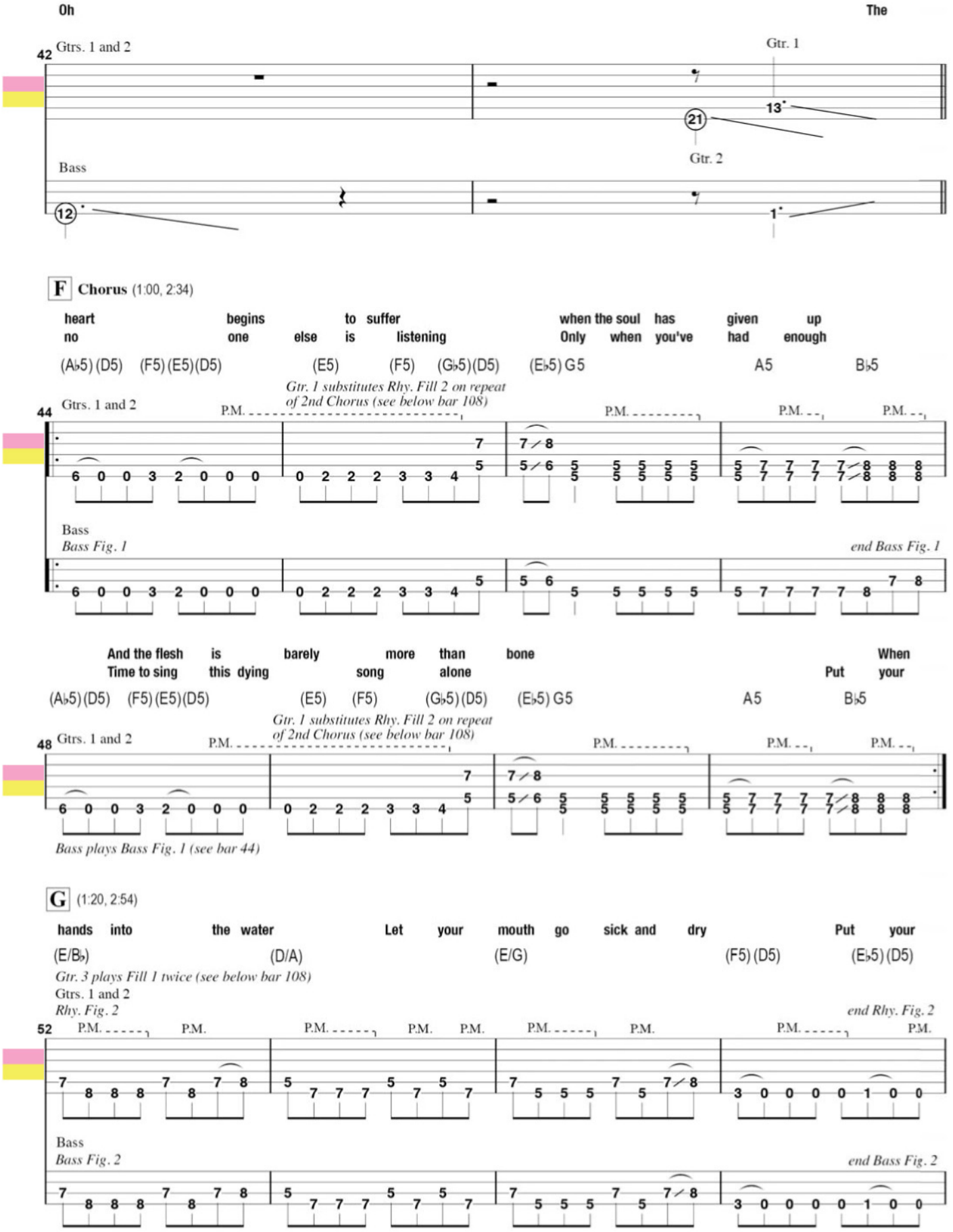
E (0:47)

Maybe you've been down too long



Maybe you've been down too long



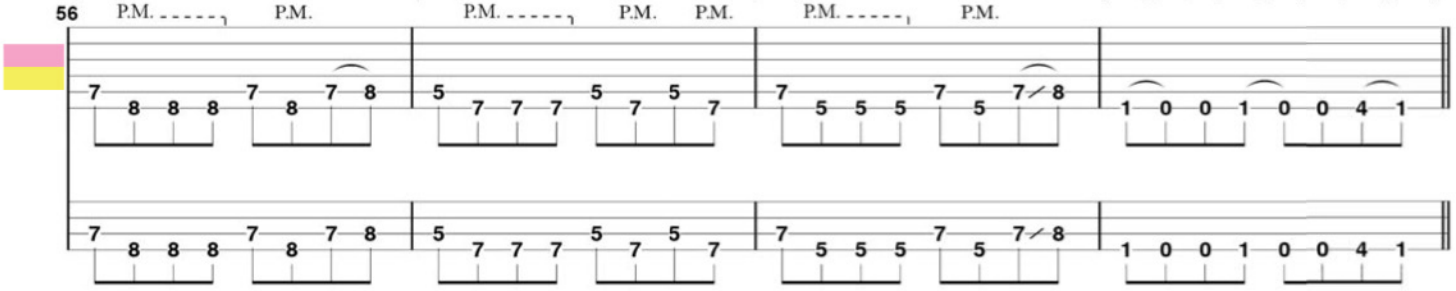

Oh
The
42
Gtrs. 1 and 2
Gtr. 1
13
21
Gtr. 2
Bass
12
1
F Chorus (1:00, 2:34)
heart begins to suffer when the soul has given up
no one else is listening Only when you've had enough
(A♭5) (D5) (F5) (E5) (D5) (E5) (F5) (G♭5) (D5) (E♭5) G5 A5 B♭5
Gtr. 1 substitutes Rhy. Fill 2 on repeat of 2nd Chorus (see below bar 108)
44
Gtrs. 1 and 2
P.M.
Bass
Bass Fig. 1
end Bass Fig. 1
And the flesh is barely more than bone When
Time to sing this dying song alone Put your
(A♭5) (D5) (F5) (E5) (D5) (E5) (F5) (G♭5) (D5) (E♭5) G5 A5 B♭5
Gtr. 1 substitutes Rhy. Fill 2 on repeat of 2nd Chorus (see below bar 108)
48
Gtrs. 1 and 2
P.M.
Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 (see bar 44)
G (1:20, 2:54)
hands into the water Let your mouth go sick and dry Put your
(E/B♭) (D/A) (E/G) (F5) (D5) (E♭5) (D5)
Gtr. 3 plays Fill 1 twice (see below bar 108)
Gtrs. 1 and 2
Rhy. Fig. 2
end Rhy. Fig. 2
52
P.M.
Bass
Bass Fig. 2
end Bass Fig. 2

2nd time, skip ahead to **M** *Outro (bar 104)*

life into your death now Let them sing until you die *(2nd time)* **Put your**

(E/B♭) (D/A) (E/G) (E♭5)(D5) (E♭5)(D5) (G♭5)(E♭5)

56 P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M.

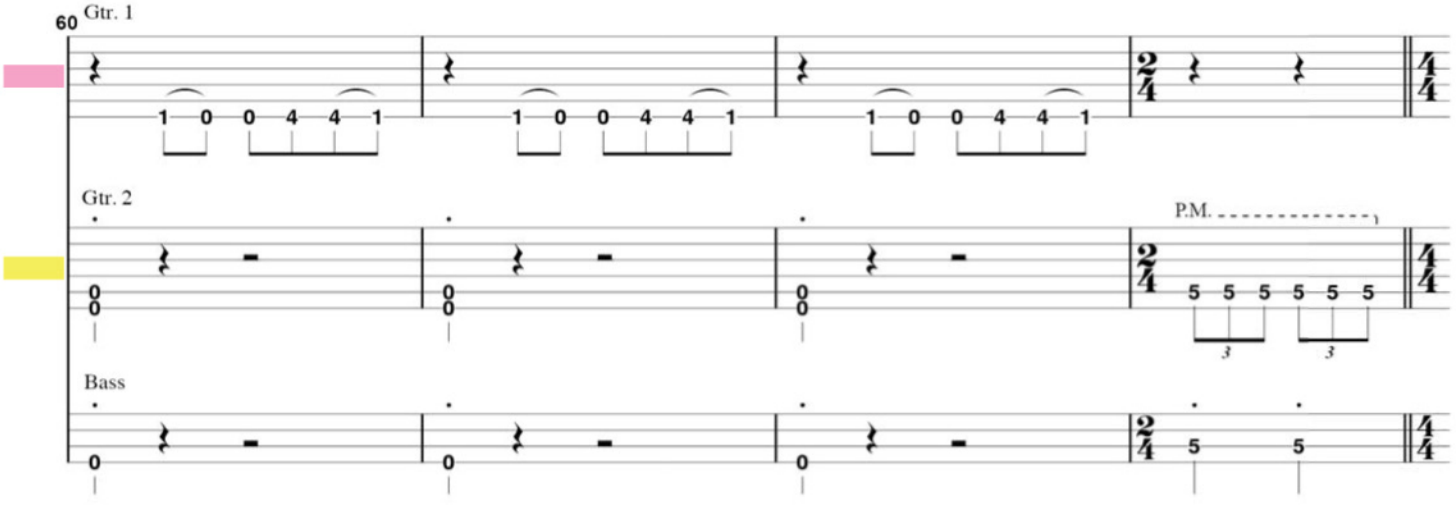


H (1:30)

Die die die Yeah

D5

60 Gtr. 1

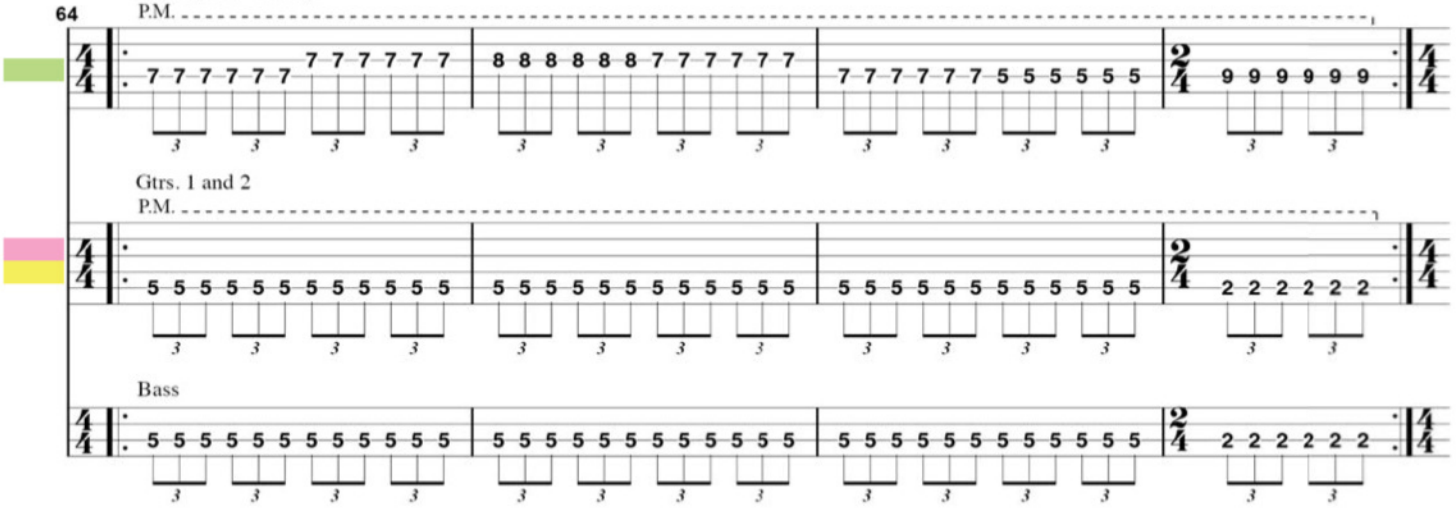


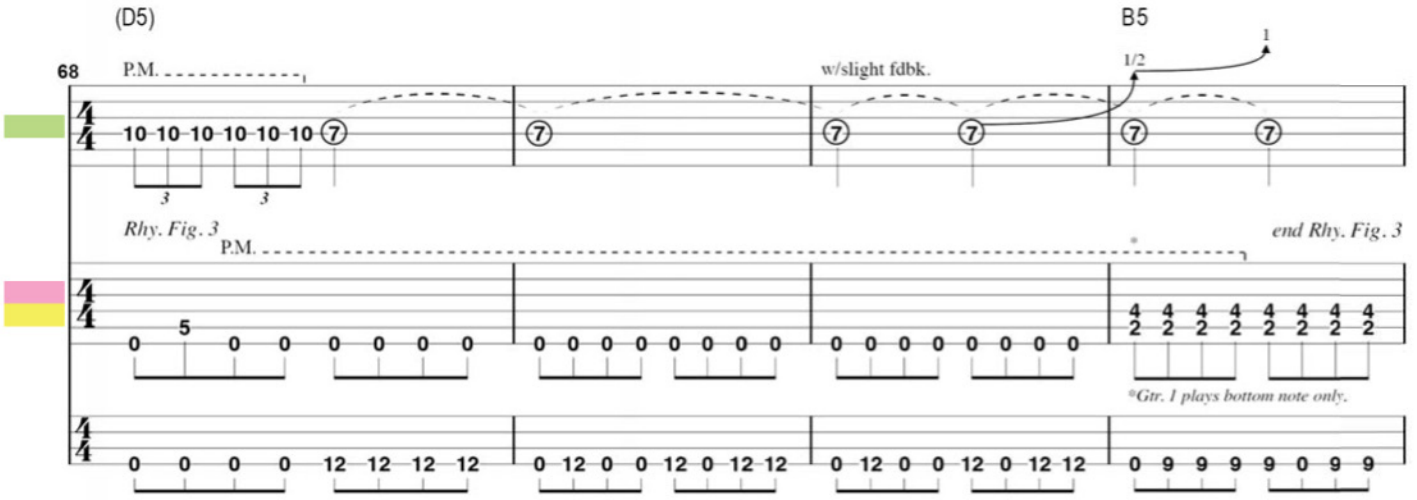
I **Interlude** (1:35)

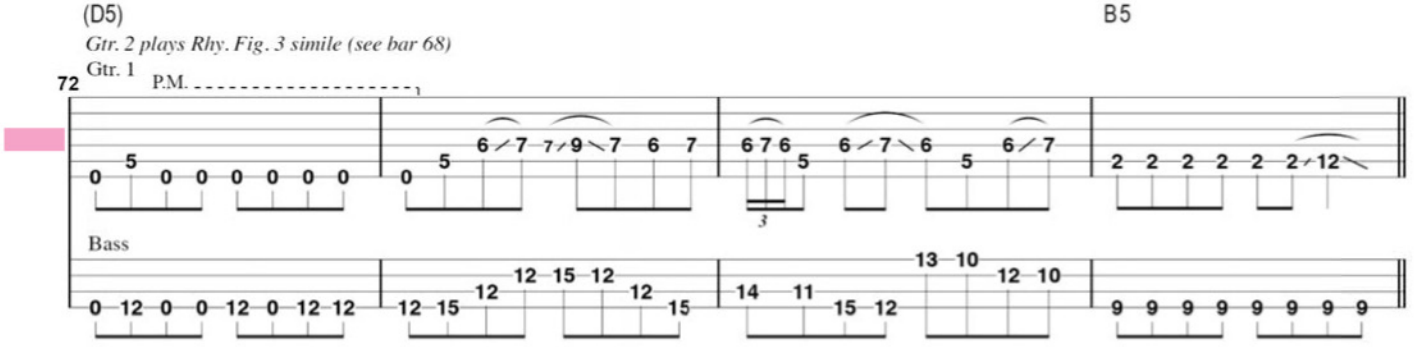
1st time: **(Ha ha ha ha...)**

(D5) (B5)

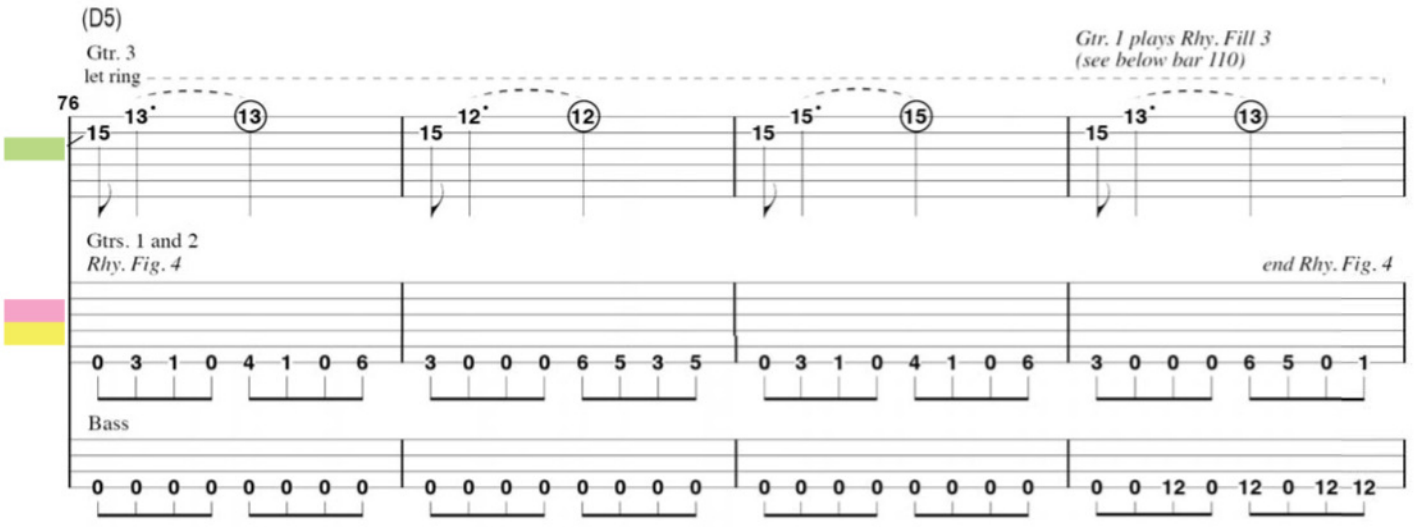
64 Gtr. 3 (elec. w/dist.) P.M.

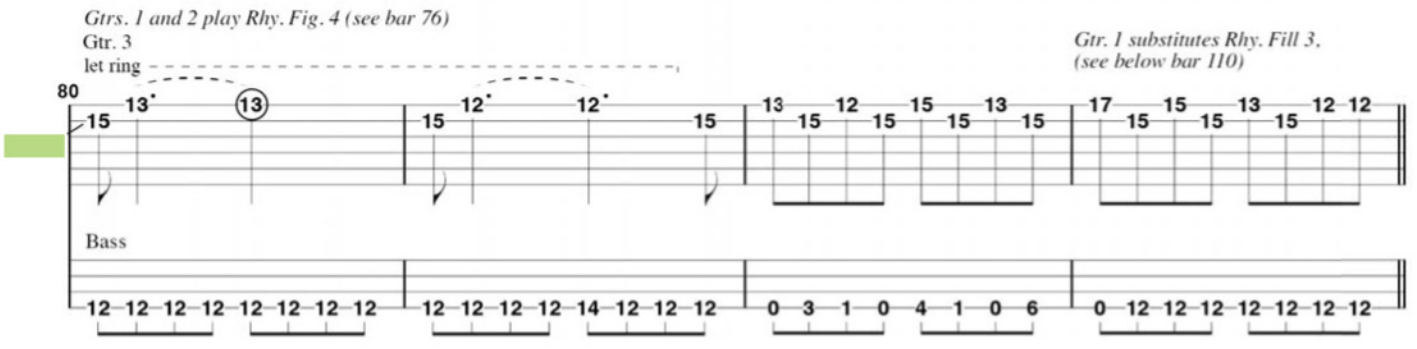






J **Guitar Solo** (1:53)





K **Breakdown** (2:04)

Maybe you've been down too long

(D5)

Gtr. 3

Gtr. 1 w/fdbk.

84

15 (15)

0

pitch: F

Gtr. 2

0 12

Bass

Bass Fig. 3

end Bass Fig. 3

0 3 1 0 4 1 0 6 3 0 0 0 6 5 3 5 0 3 1 0 4 1 0 6 3 0 0 0 6 5 0 3

Maybe you've been down too long

88 Gtr. 1

w/fdbk.

w/bar -1

0 0 0 19 0 0 (0)

pitch: F

Gtr. 2

13 16 13 16 w/fdbk. 16 16 14

pitch: E♭

Bass plays Bass Fig. 3 (see bar 84)

L **2nd Verse** (2:14)

Think hard you bastards

If I don't get an answer

You're gonna tell me why

You're gonna sing and die

N.C.

Gtrs. 1 and 2 play Rhy. Fig. 4 (see bar 76)

Bass

92 *Bass Fig. 4*

end Bass Fig. 4

0 3 1 0 4 1 0 6 3 0 0 0 6 5 3 5 0 3 1 0 4 1 0 6 3 0 0 0 6 5 0 1

Think hard you bastards

You're gonna tell me why

D5 F5 E♭5 D5 G♭5 E♭5 D5 A♭5 F5 D5 A♭5 G5 F5 G5 D5 F5 E♭5 D5 G♭5 E♭5 D5 A♭5 F5 D5 A♭5 G5 D5 E♭5

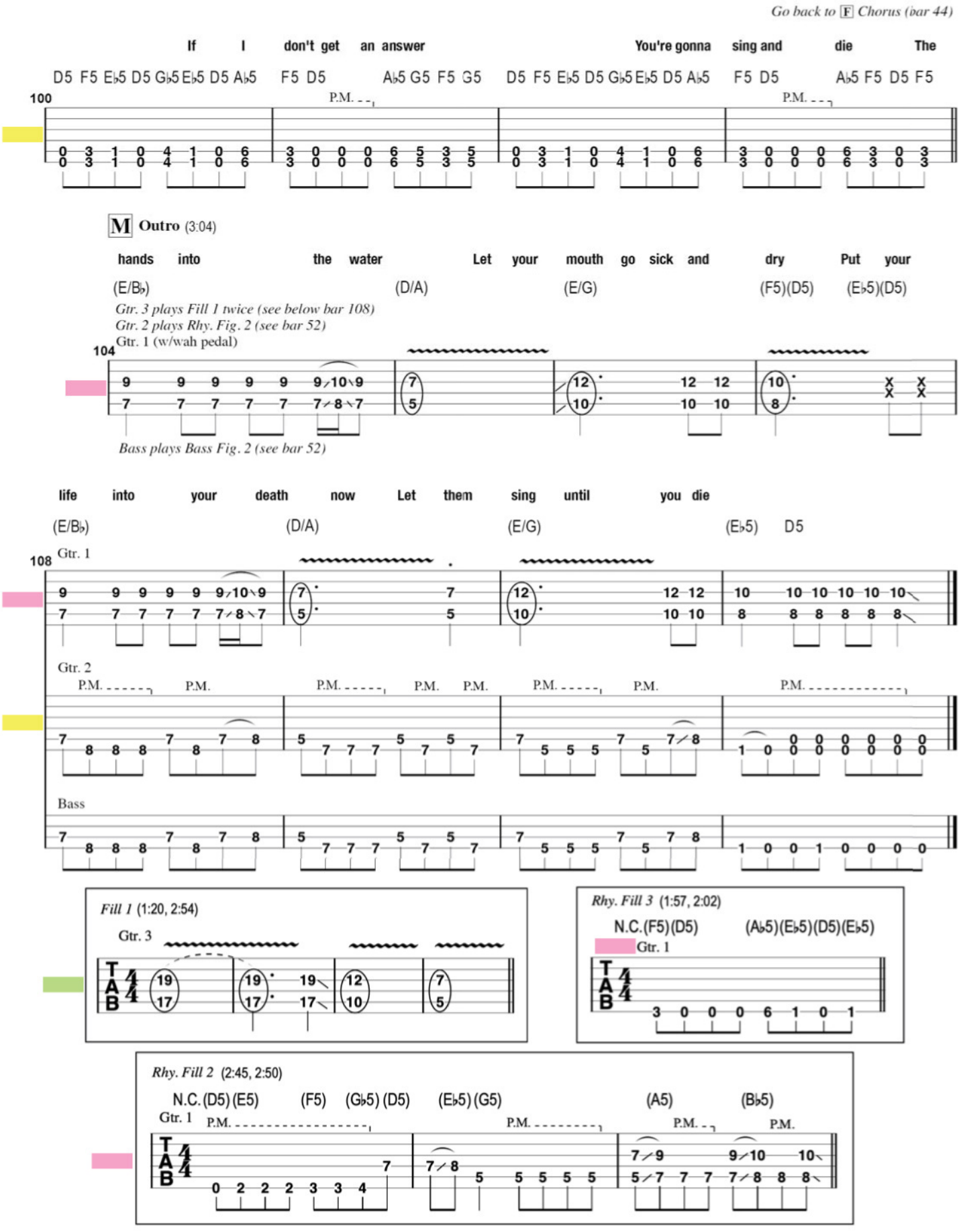
Gtr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 4 twice (see bar 76)

96 Gtr. 2

P.M. P.M. P.M.

0 3 1 0 4 1 0 6 3 0 0 0 6 5 3 5 0 3 1 0 4 1 0 6 3 0 0 0 6 5 0 1

Bass plays Bass Fig. 4 twice (see bar 92)


Go back to F Chorus (bar 44)
If I don't get an answer You're gonna sing and die The
D5 F5 E♭5 D5 G♭5 E♭5 D5 A♭5 F5 D5 A♭5 G5 F5 G5 D5 F5 E♭5 D5 G♭5 E♭5 D5 A♭5 F5 D5 A♭5 F5 D5 F5
100
P.M.
M Outro (3:04)
hands into the water Let your mouth go sick and dry Put your
(E/B♭) (D/A) (E/G) (F5)(D5) (E♭5)(D5)
Gtr. 3 plays Fill 1 twice (see below bar 108)
Gtr. 2 plays Rhy. Fig. 2 (see bar 52)
Gtr. 1 (w/wah pedal)
104
Bass plays Bass Fig. 2 (see bar 52)
life into your death now Let them sing until you die
(E/B♭) (D/A) (E/G) (E♭5) D5
108
Gtr. 1
Gtr. 2
Bass
Fill 1 (1:20, 2:54)
Gtr. 3
Rhy. Fill 3 (1:57, 2:02)
N.C.(F5)(D5) (A♭5)(E♭5)(D5)(E♭5)
Gtr. 1
Rhy. Fill 2 (2:45, 2:50)
N.C.(D5)(E5) (F5) (G♭5)(D5) (E♭5)(G5) (A5) (B♭5)
Gtr. 1

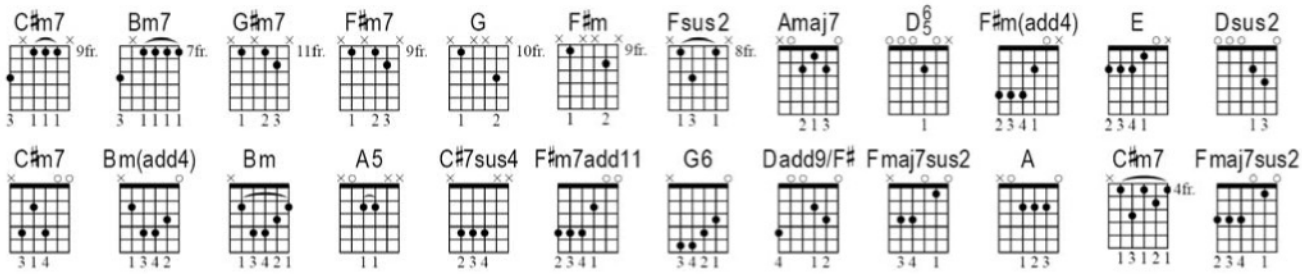
"NOT ALONE"

Lari Basilio

As heard on **FAR MORE**

Words and Music by LARI BASILIO • *Transcribed by* JEFF PERRIN

All guitars are in drop-D tuning (low to high: D, A, D, G, B, E).



A **Intro** (0:00)

Moderately ♩ = 117

(w/half-time feel)

N.C. (D)

Gtr. 1 (elec. w/light overdrive and reverb and delay effects)

C♯m7

Riff A

fingerstyle

let ring throughout

(vibrato w/bar)

-1/2*

* "dip" w/bar

Bm7

N.C. (Asus2)

(D6)

-1/2

(C♯m7)

G♯m7 F♯m7

end Riff A

(grad. decrease tempo)

G

F♯m

Fsus2

-1/2

(w/pick)

"NOT ALONE"
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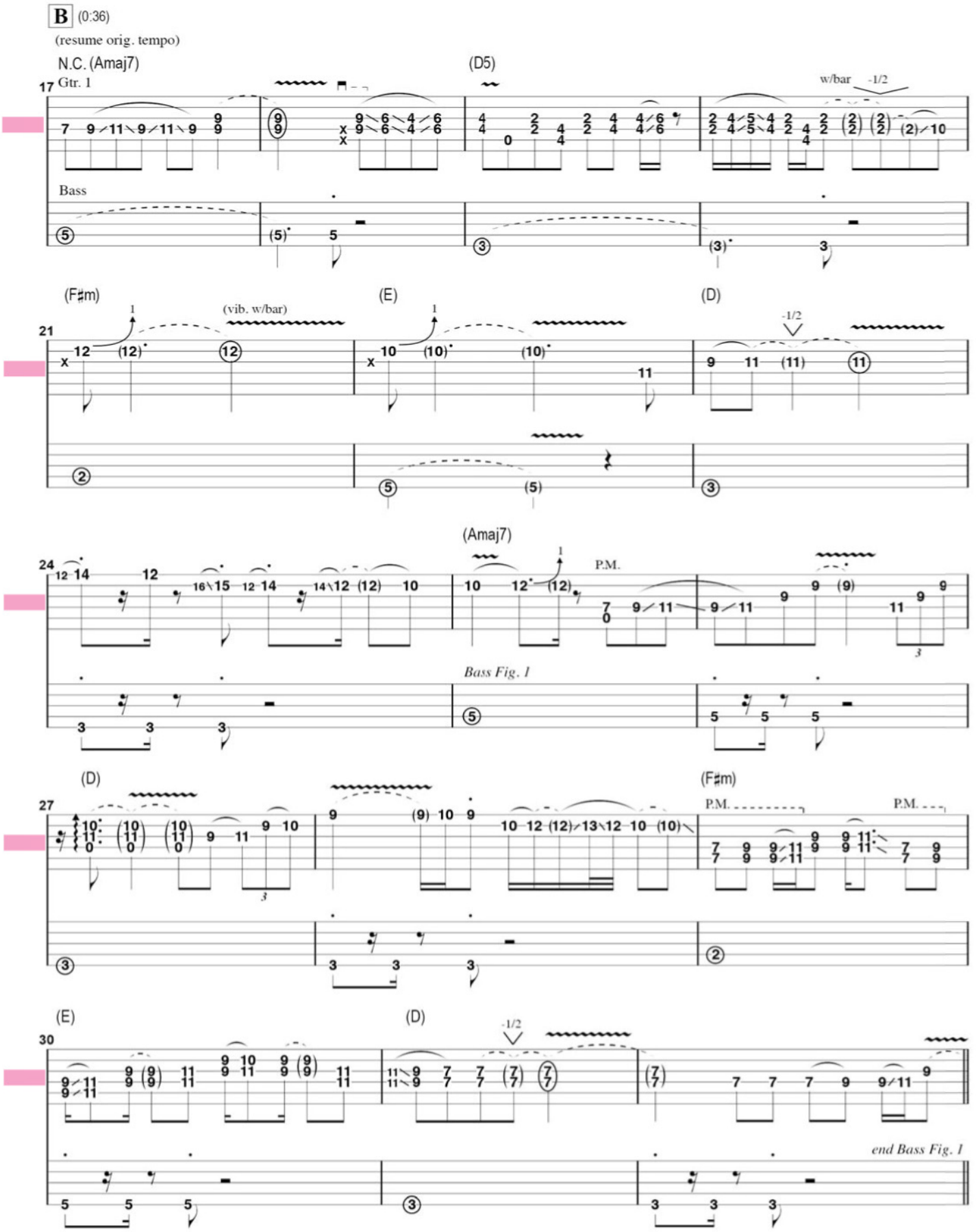
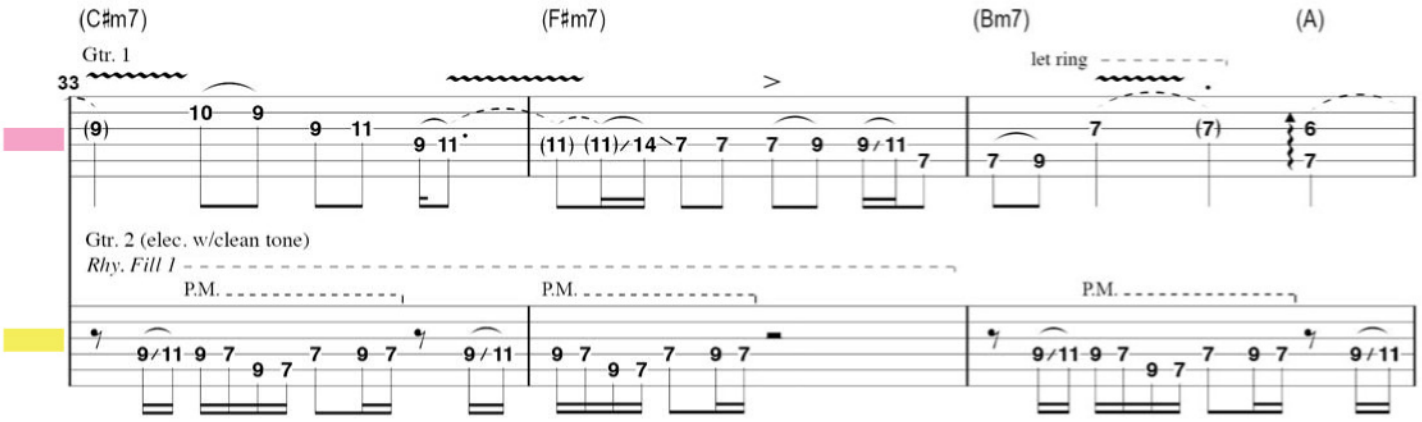
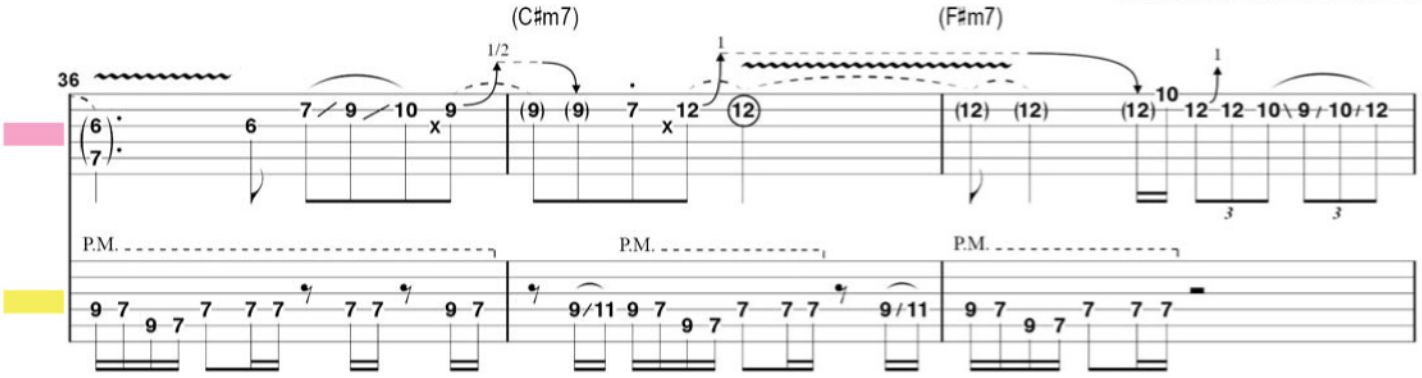
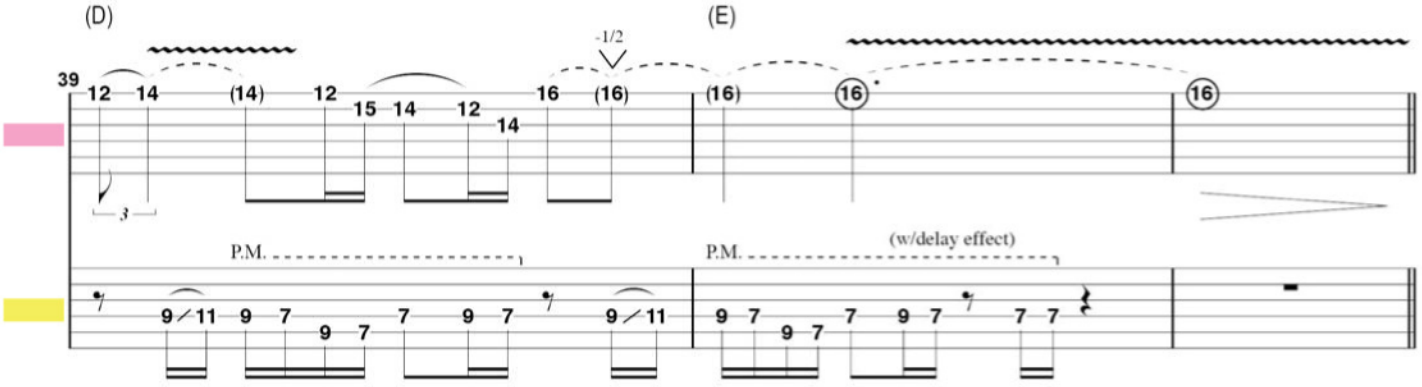

B (0:36)
(resume orig. tempo)
N.C. (Amaj7)
(D5)
17 Gtr. 1
w/bar -1/2
Bass
(F♯m)
(E)
(D)
21
(vib. w/bar)
-1/2
(Amaj7)
24
P.M.
Bass Fig. 1
(D)
(F♯m)
27
P.M.
P.M.
(E)
(D)
30
-1/2
end Bass Fig. 1

C (1:09, 2:00)

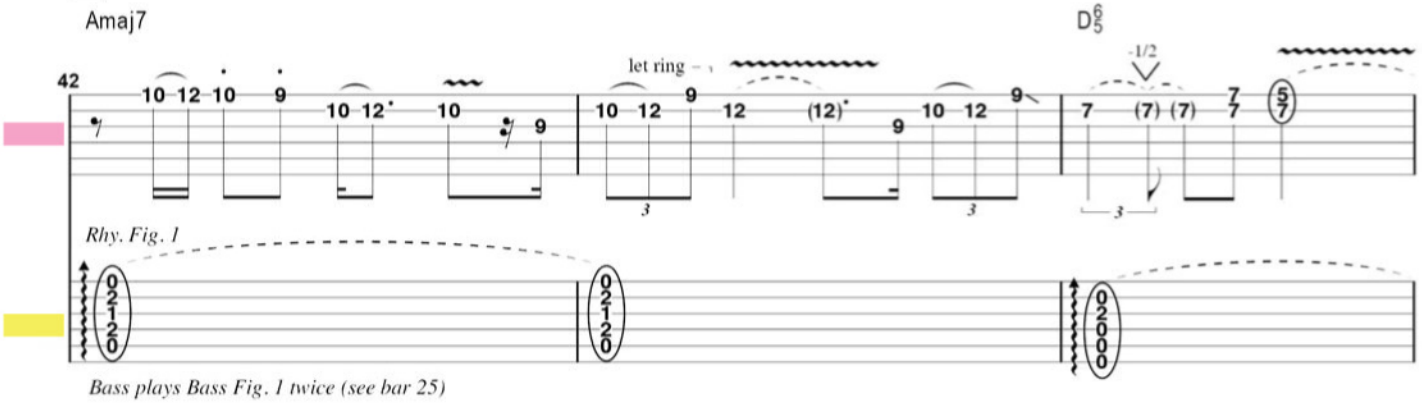


2nd time, skip ahead to **E** *(bar 58)*

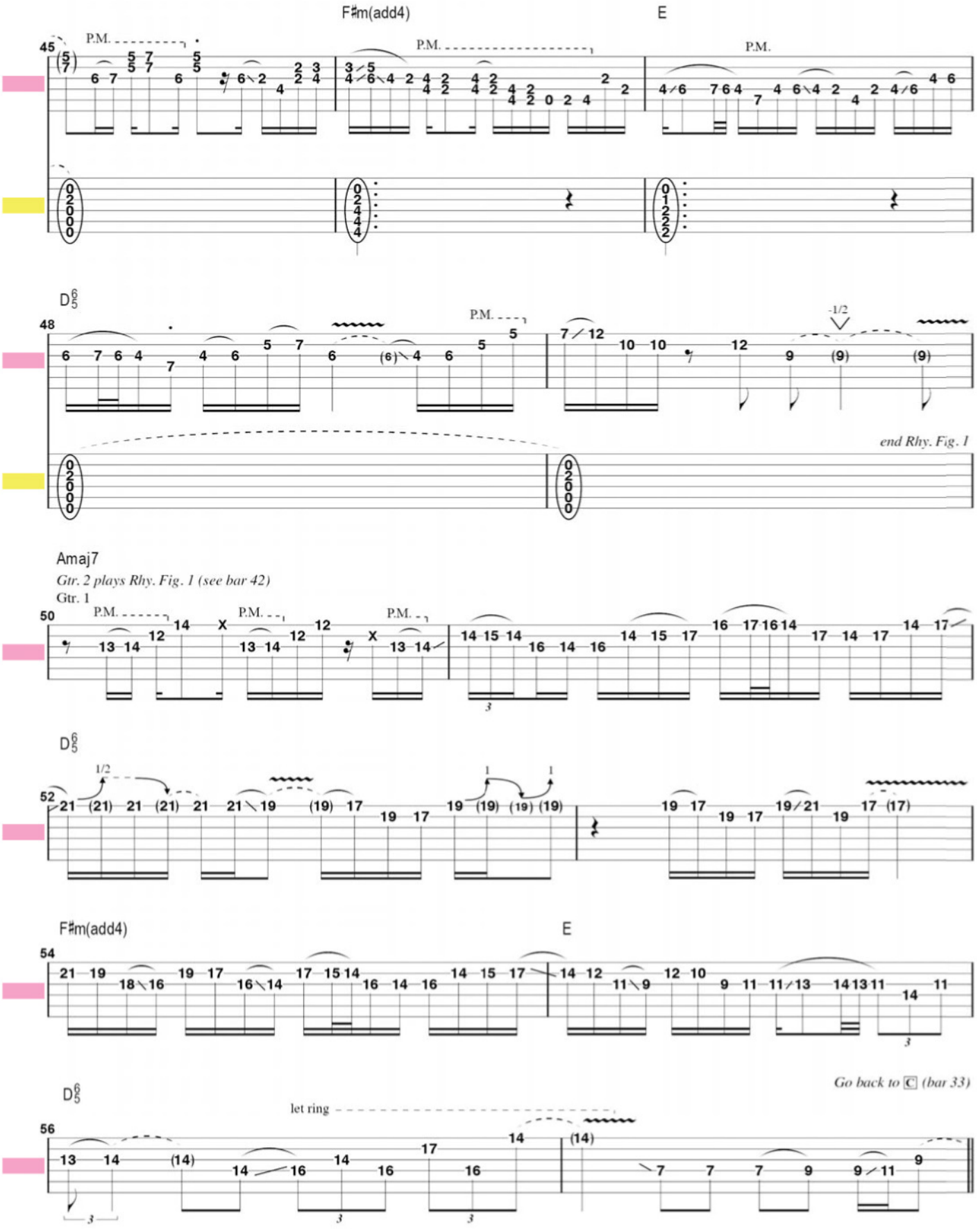
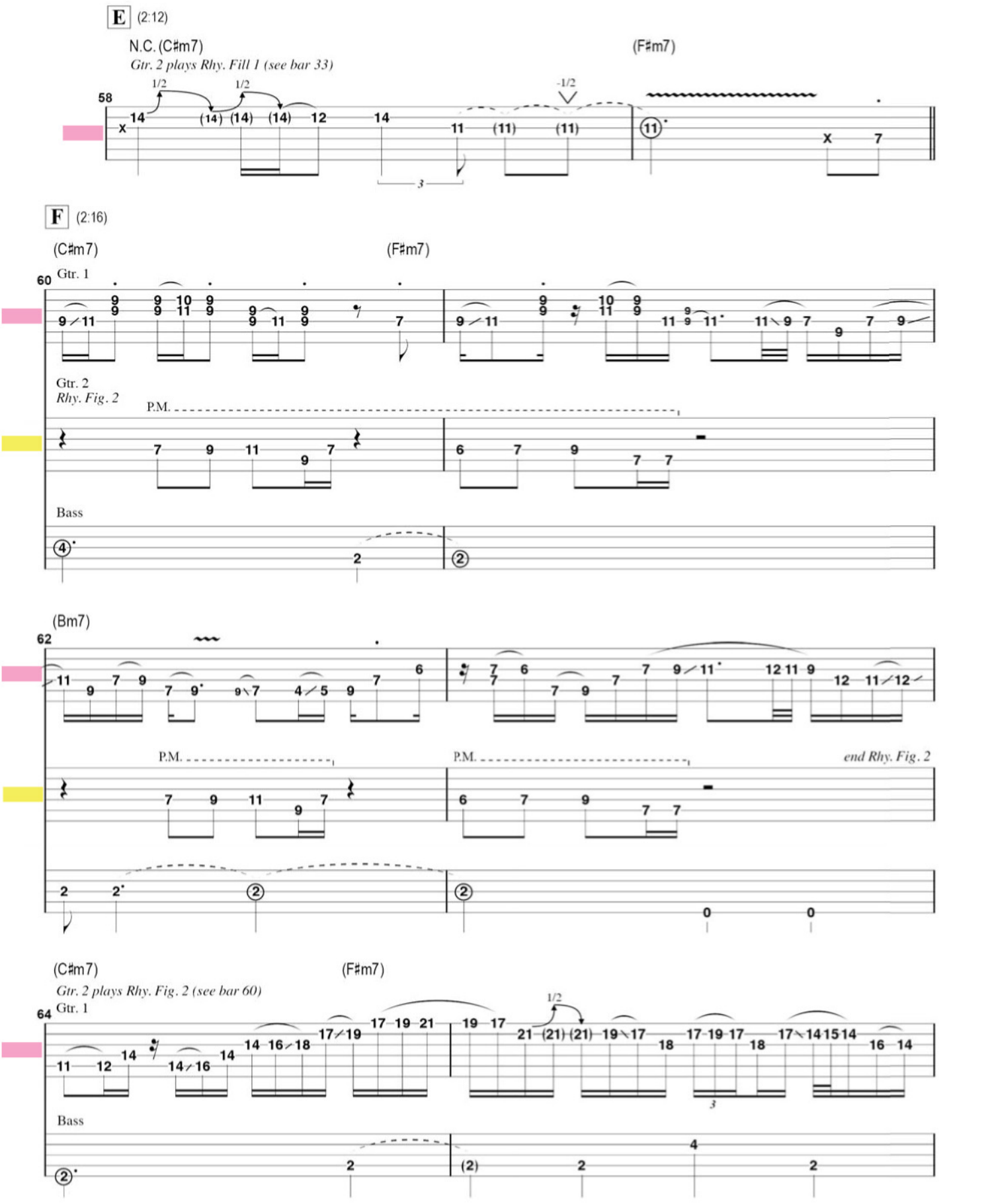


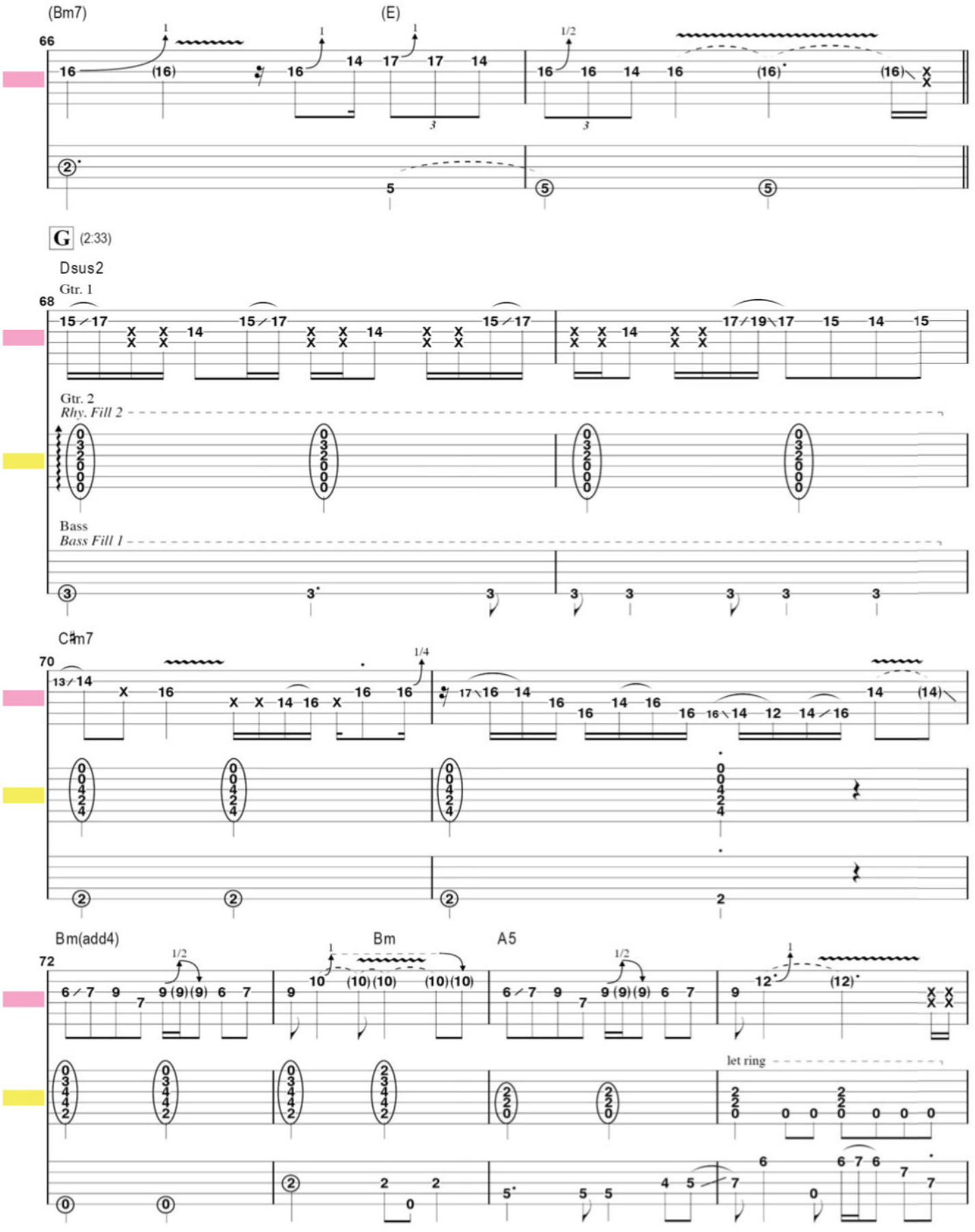


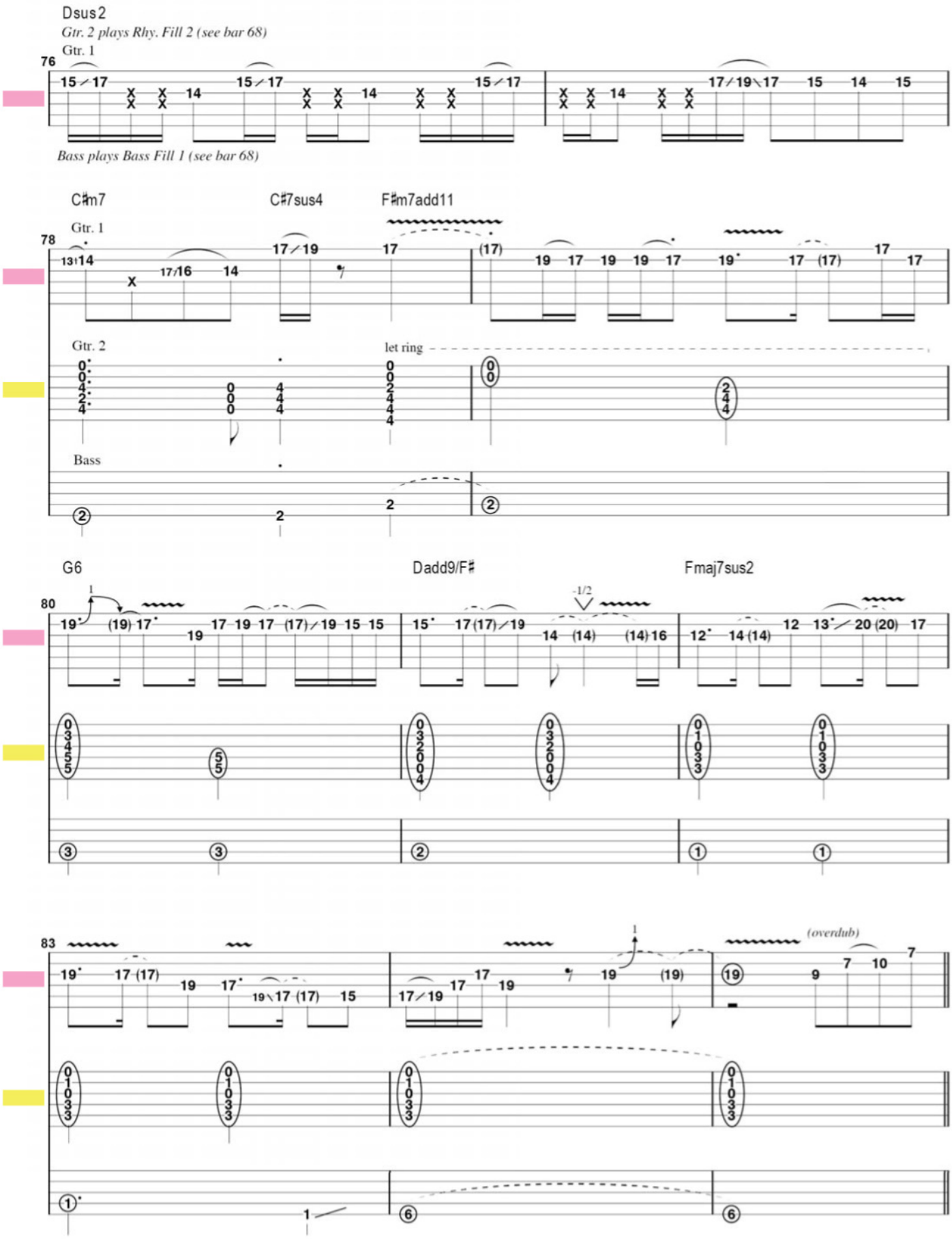
D (1:27)

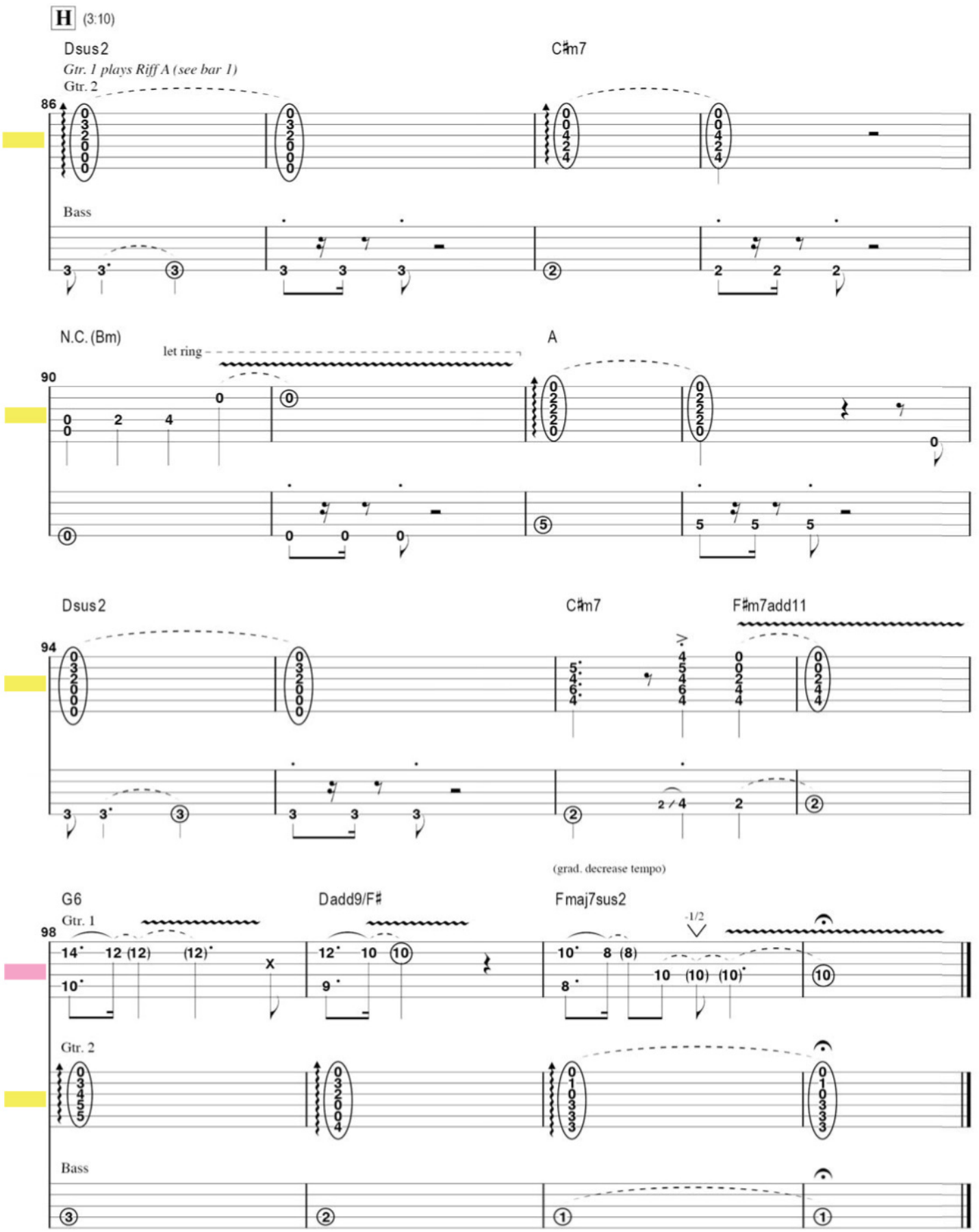


Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 twice (see bar 25)


F♯m(add4)
E
45
P.M.
P.M.
P.M.
D5/6
48
P.M.
-1/2
end Rhy. Fig. 1
Amaj7
Gtr. 2 plays Rhy. Fig. 1 (see bar 42)
Gtr. 1
50
P.M.
P.M.
P.M.
D5/6
52
1/2
F♯m(add4)
E
54
Go back to C (bar 33)
D5/6
let ring
56

E (2:12)
N.C. (C♯m7)
(F♯m7)
Gtr. 2 plays Rhy. Fill 1 (see bar 33)
58
F (2:16)
(C♯m7)
(F♯m7)
60
Gtr. 1
Gtr. 2
Rhy. Fig. 2
P.M.
Bass
(Bm7)
62
P.M.
P.M.
end Rhy. Fig. 2
(C♯m7)
(F♯m7)
Gtr. 2 plays Rhy. Fig. 2 (see bar 60)
64
Gtr. 1
Bass


(Bm7)
(E)
66
G (2:33)
Dsus2
Gtr. 1
68
Gtr. 2
Rhy. Fill 2
Bass
Bass Fill 1
C♯m7
70
Bm(add4)
Bm
A5
72
let ring


Dsus2
Gtr. 2 plays Rhy. Fill 2 (see bar 68)
Gtr. 1
76
Bass plays Bass Fill 1 (see bar 68)
C♯m7
C♯7sus4
F♯m7add11
Gtr. 1
78
Gtr. 2
let ring
Bass
G6
Dadd9/F♯
Fmaj7sus2
80
-1/2
83
(overdub)

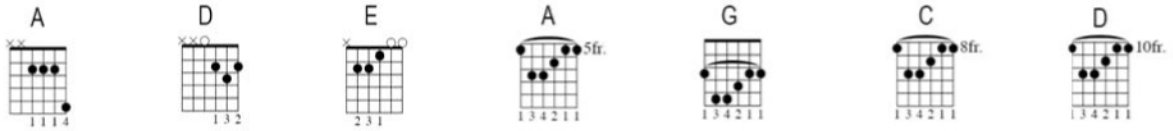

H (3:10)
Dsus2
C♯m7
Gtr. 1 plays Riff A (see bar 1)
Gtr. 2
86
Bass
N.C. (Bm)
let ring
A
90
Dsus2
C♯m7
F♯m7add11
94
(grad. decrease tempo)
G6
Dadd9/F♯
Fmaj7sus2
Gtr. 1
98
-1/2
Gtr. 2
Bass

"SPIRIT IN THE SKY"

Norman Greenbaum

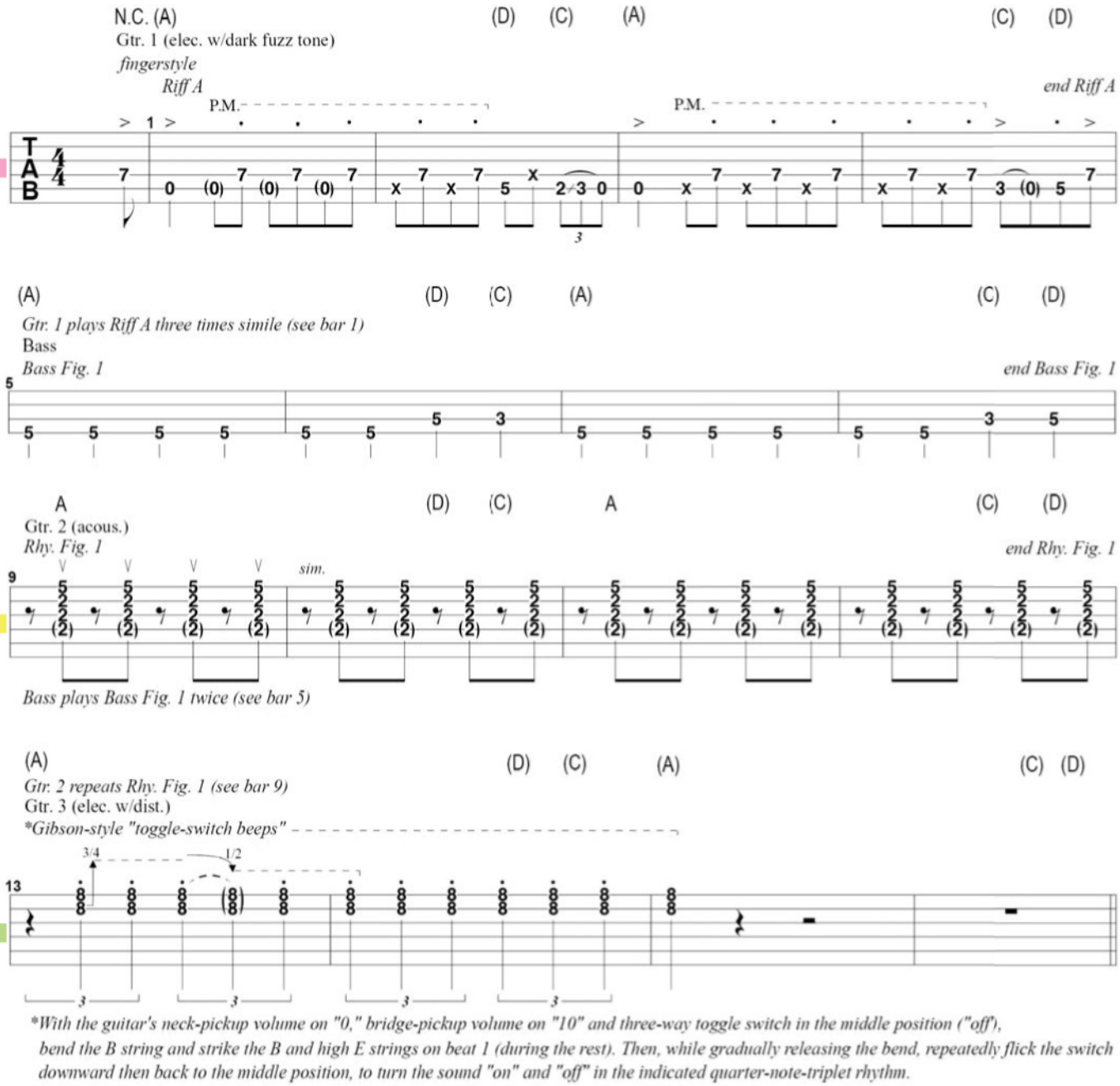
As heard on **SPIRIT IN THE SKY**

Words and Music by NORMAN GREENBAUM • *Transcribed by* JIMMY BROWN *and* JEFF PERRIN



A Intro (0:00)

Moderate Shuffle (♩♫ = ♩ ♪³) ♩ = 128



*With the guitar's neck-pickup volume on "0," bridge-pickup volume on "10" and three-way toggle switch in the middle position ("off"), bend the B string and strike the B and high E strings on beat 1 (during the rest). Then, while gradually releasing the bend, repeatedly flick the switch downward then back to the middle position, to turn the sound "on" and "off" in the indicated quarter-note-triplet rhythm.

"SPIRIT IN THE SKY"
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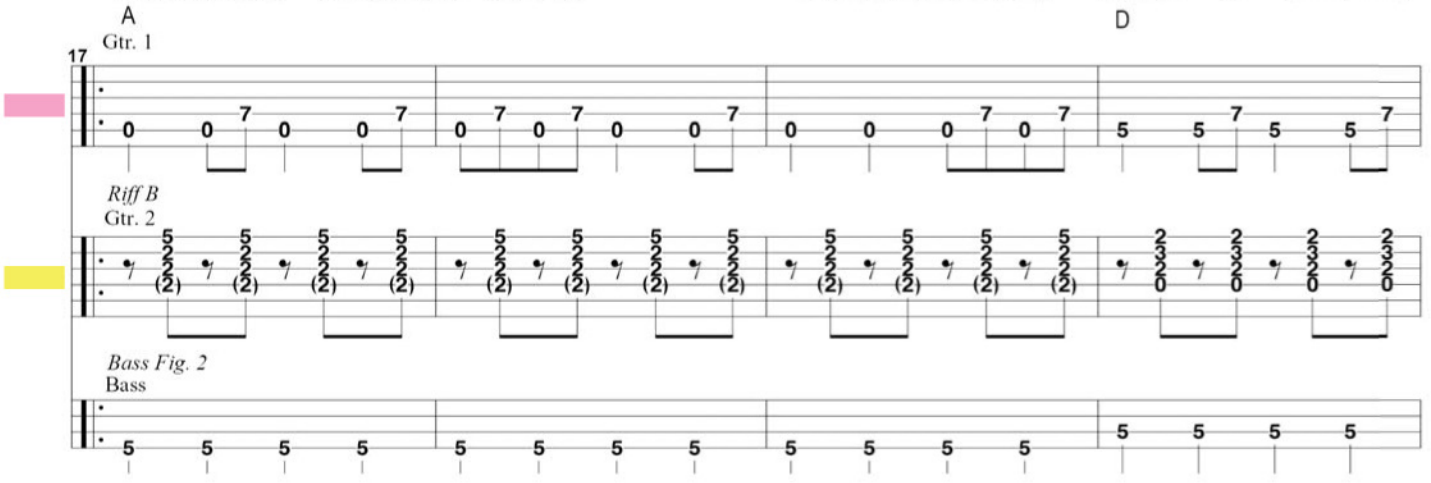
B **1st and 2nd Verses** (0:31, 1:16)

1. When I die and they lay me to rest gonna go to the place that's the best
Goin' up to the spirit in the sky (spirit in the sky) That's where I'm gonna go when I die (when I die)

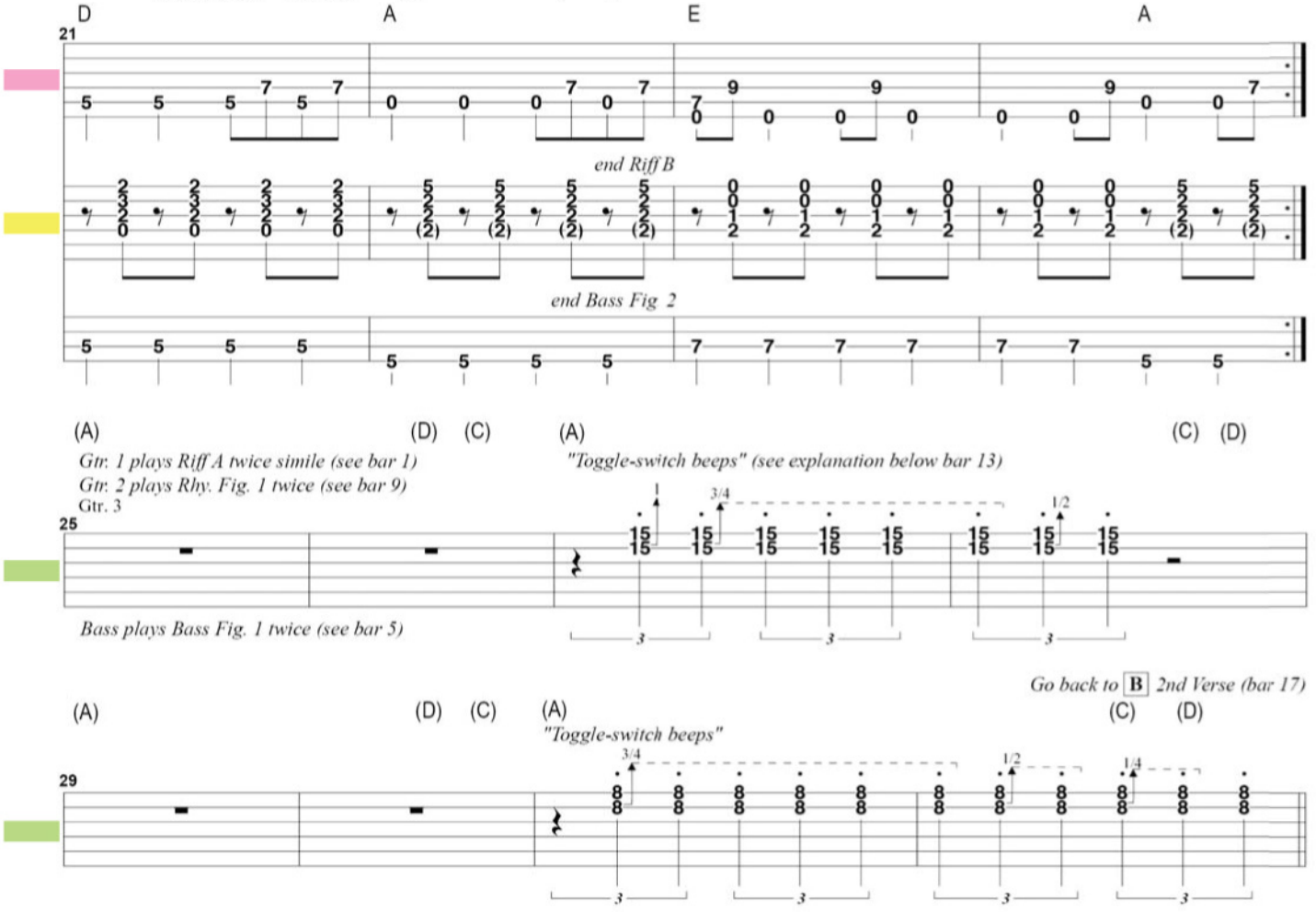
2. Prepare yourself You know it's a must Gotta have a friend in Jesus
Gonna recommend you to the spirit in the sky That's where you're gonna go when you die (when you die)

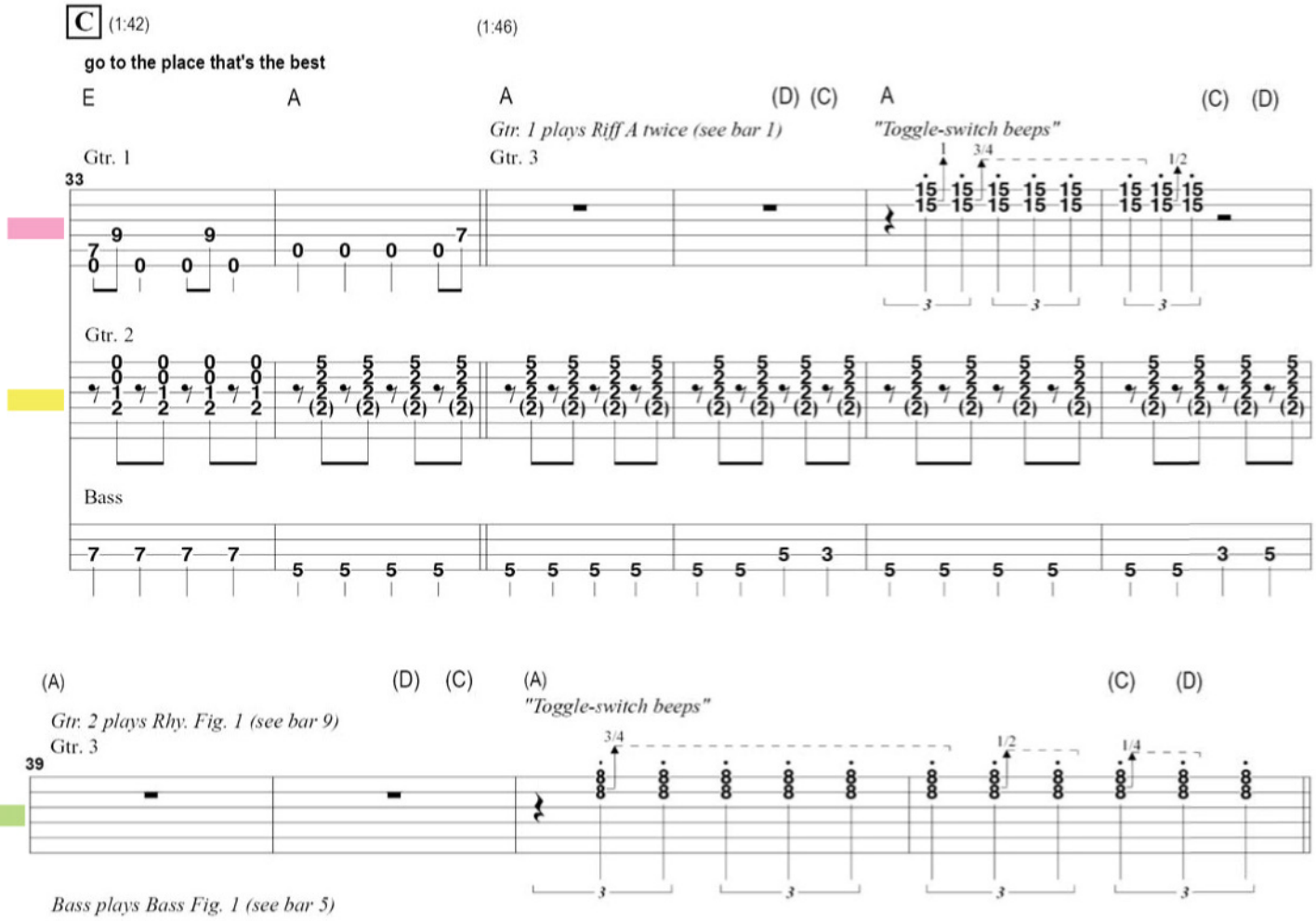


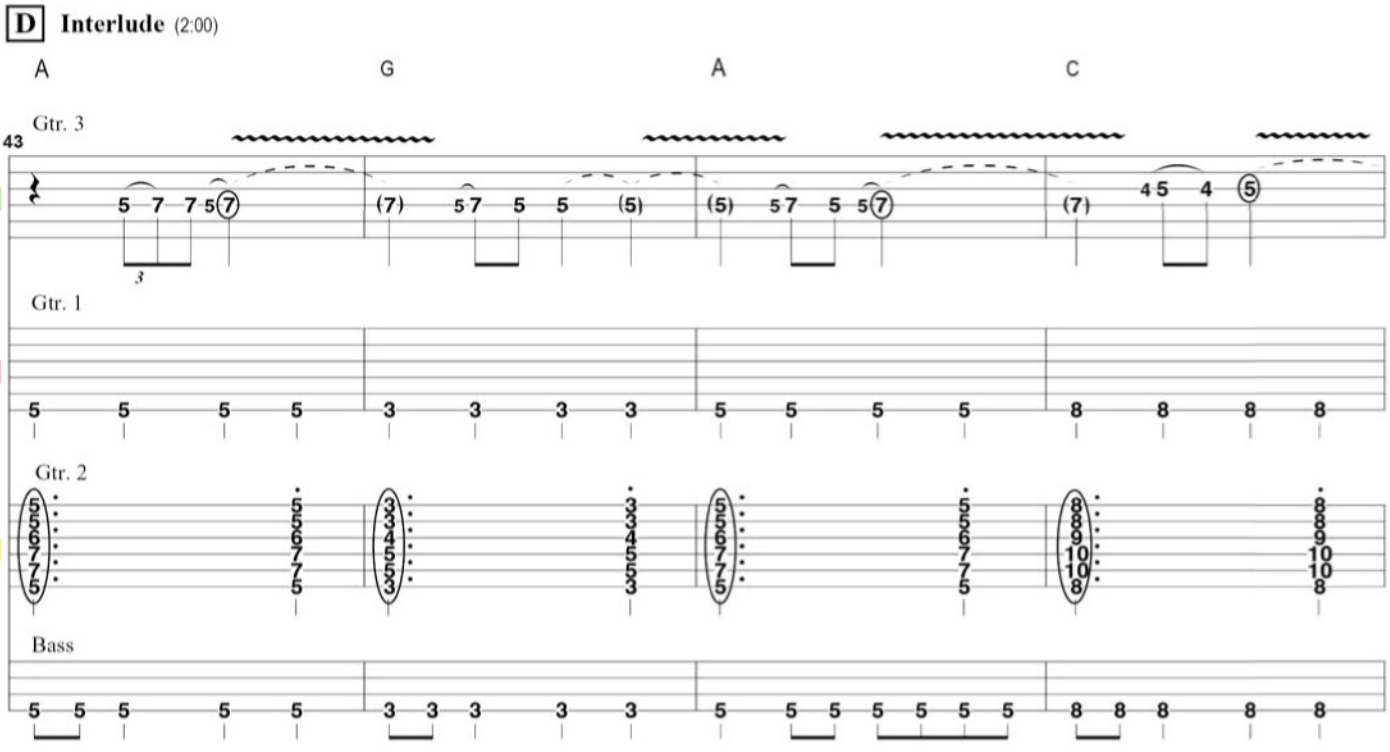
2nd time on 2nd verse, skip ahead to **C** *(bar 33)*

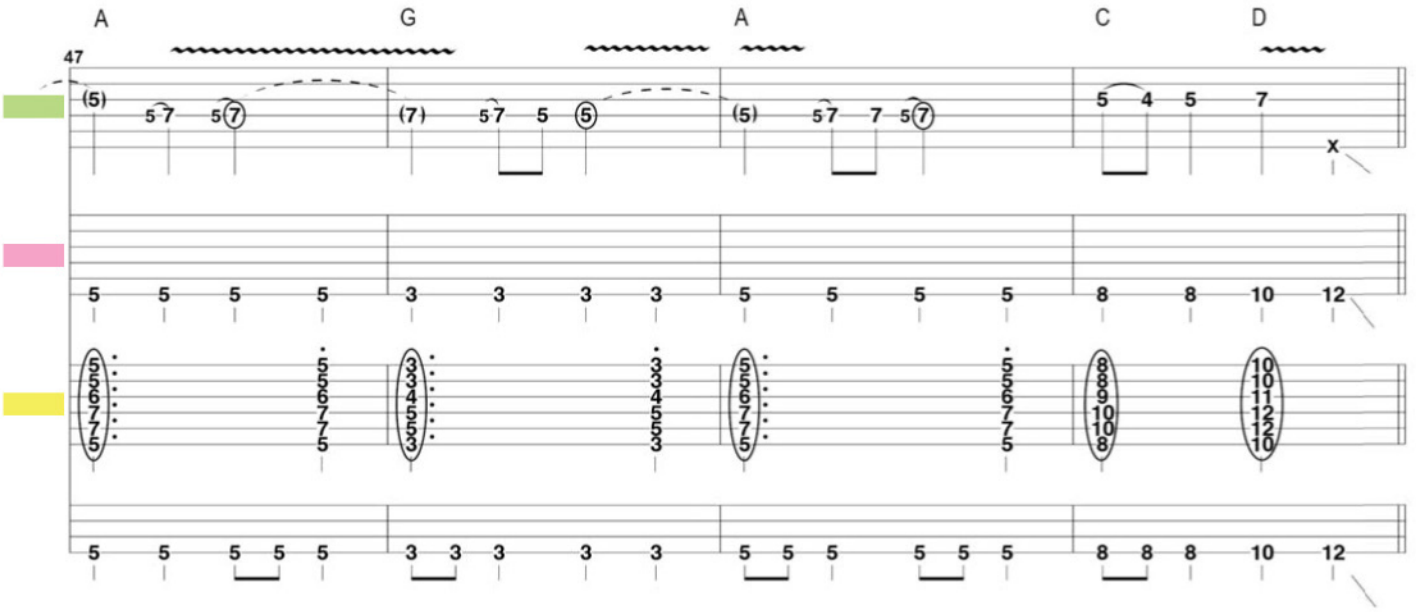
When they lay me down to die goin' up to the spirit in the sky
When I die and they lay me to rest I'm gonna go to the place that's the best

So you know that when you die He's gonna recommend you to the spirit in the sky (spirit in the sky)
When you die and they lay you to rest you're gonna

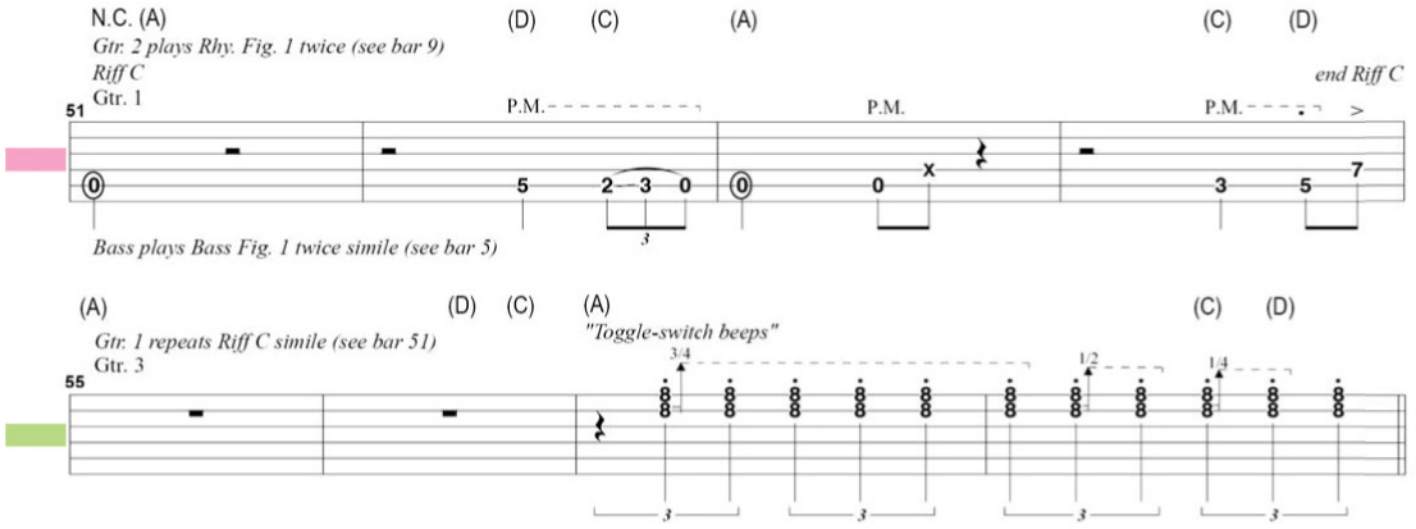


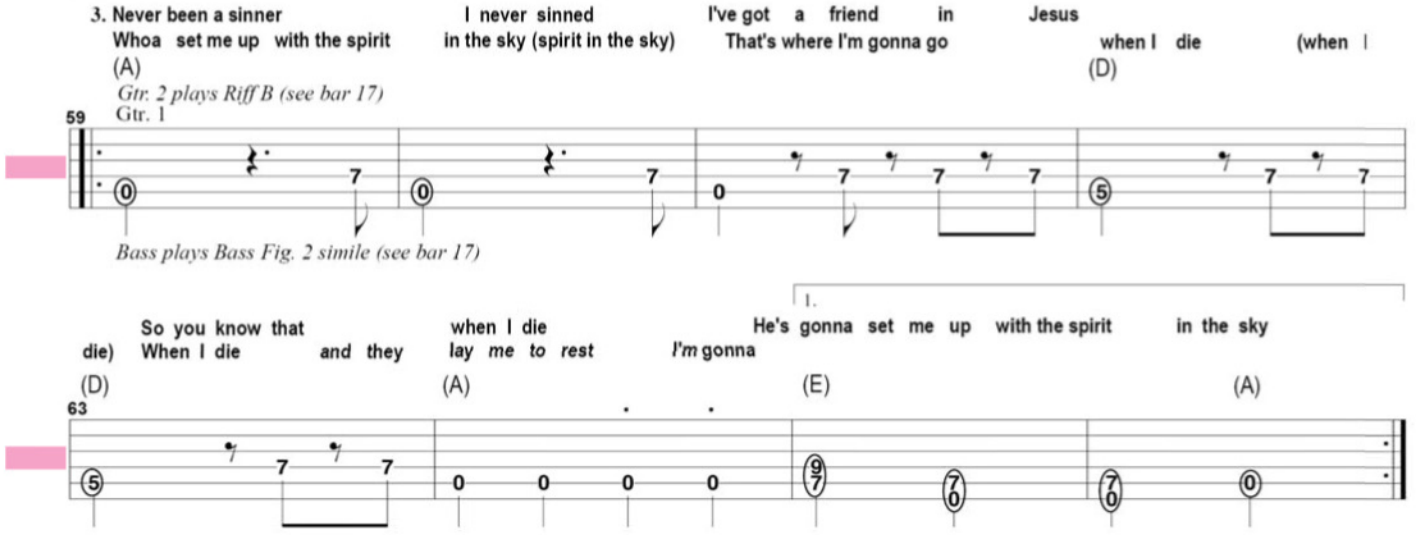
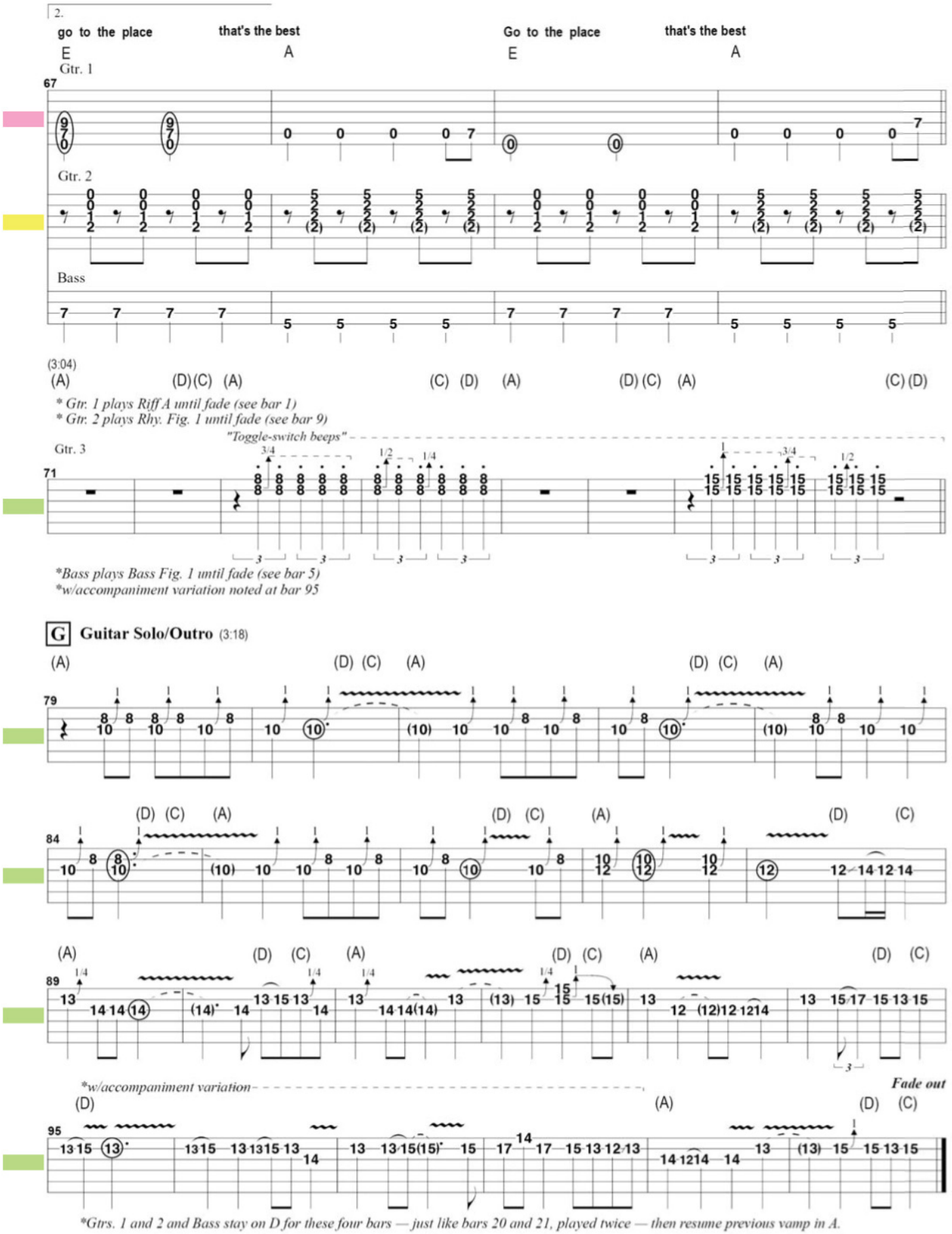

C (1:42)
(1:46)
go to the place that's the best
E
A
A
(D) (C)
A
(C) (D)
Gtr. 1 plays Riff A twice (see bar 1)
"Toggle-switch beeps"
Gtr. 1
Gtr. 3
33
Gtr. 2
Bass
(A)
(D) (C)
(A)
(C) (D)
Gtr. 2 plays Rhy. Fig. 1 (see bar 9)
"Toggle-switch beeps"
Gtr. 3
39
Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 (see bar 5)


D Interlude (2:00)
A
G
A
C
Gtr. 3
43
Gtr. 1
Gtr. 2
Bass



E **Breakdown/Re-intro** (2:15)



F **3rd Verse** (2:30)


2.
go to the place
that's the best
Go to the place
that's the best
E
A
E
A
Gtr. 1
67
Gtr. 2
Bass
(3:04)
(A) (D) (C) (A) (C) (D) (A) (D) (C) (A) (C) (D)
* Gtr. 1 plays Riff A until fade (see bar 1)
* Gtr. 2 plays Rhy. Fig. 1 until fade (see bar 9)
"Toggle-switch beeps"
Gtr. 3
71
*Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 until fade (see bar 5)
*w/accompaniment variation noted at bar 95
G Guitar Solo/Outro (3:18)
(A) (D) (C) (A) (D) (C) (A)
79
(D) (C) (A) (D) (C) (A) (D) (C)
84
(A) (D) (C) (A) (D) (C) (A) (D) (C)
89
*w/accompaniment variation
Fade out
(D) (A) (D) (C)
95
*Gtrs. 1 and 2 and Bass stay on D for these four bars — just like bars 20 and 21, played twice — then resume previous vamp in A.

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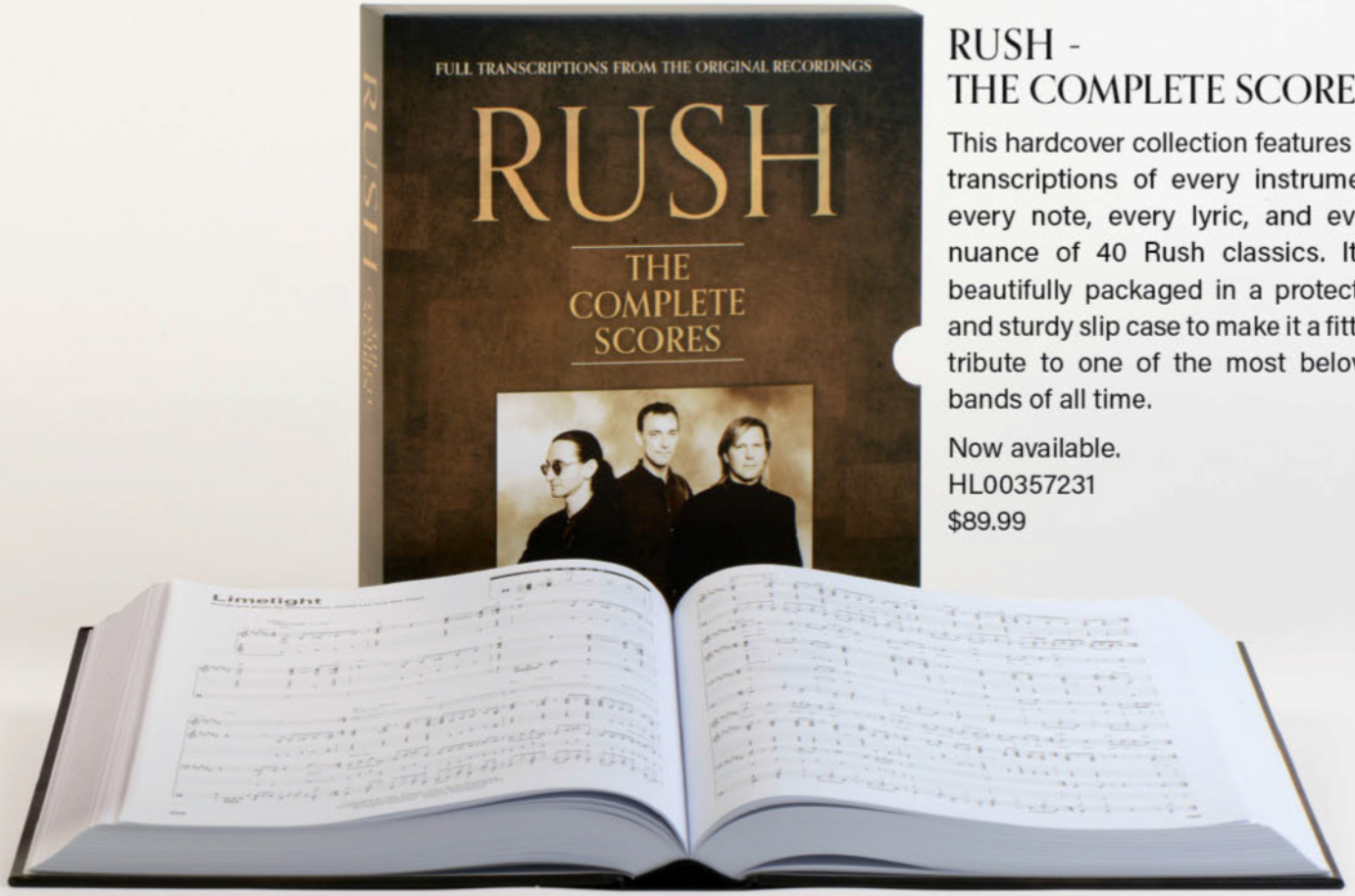

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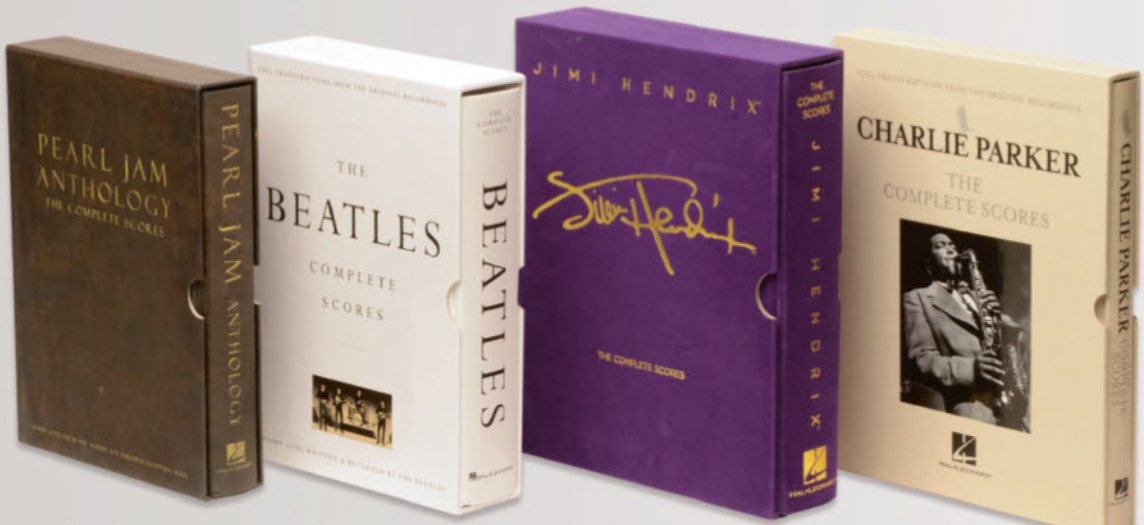

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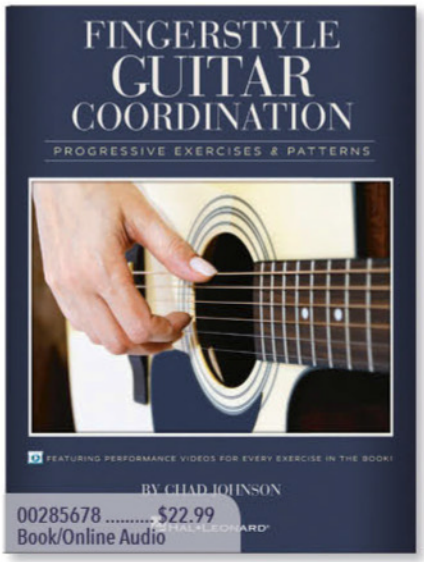

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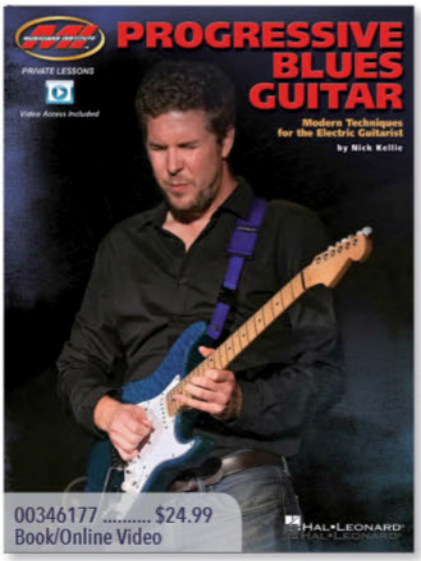

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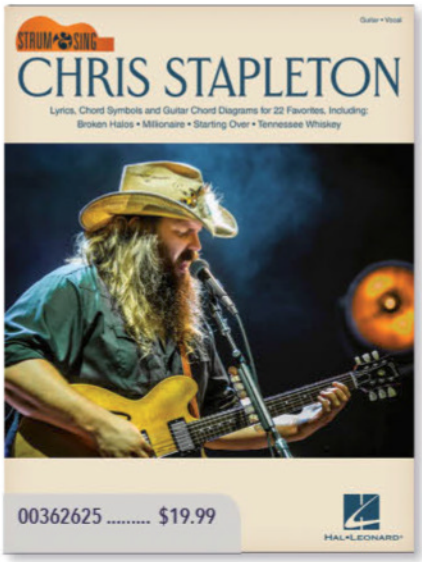

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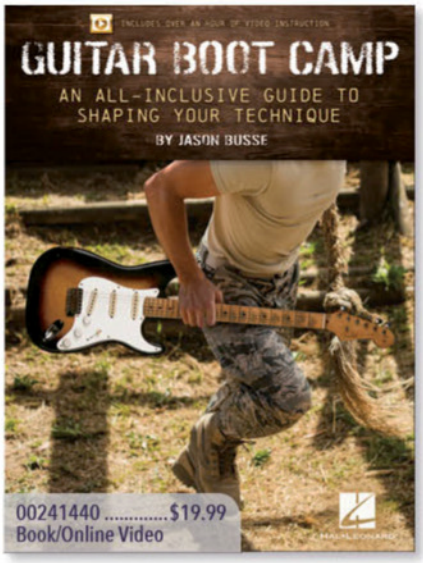

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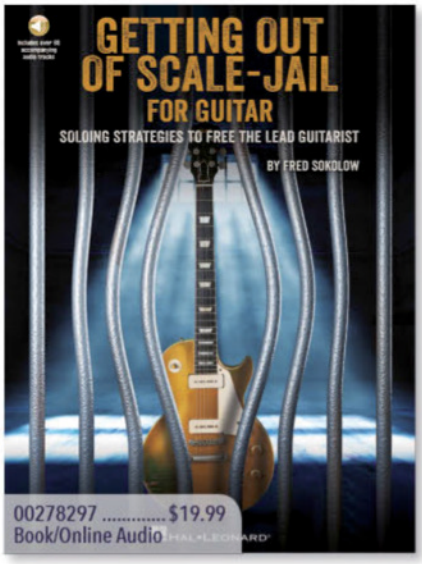

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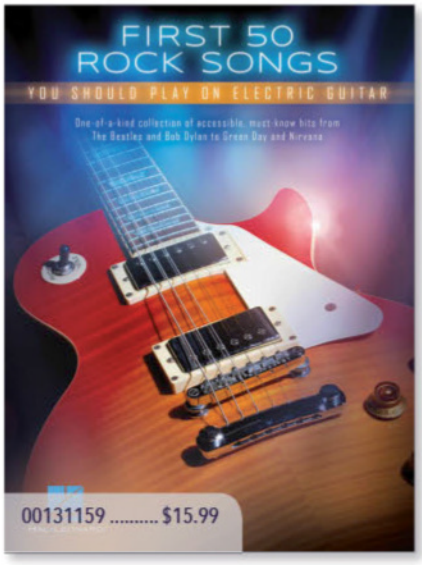

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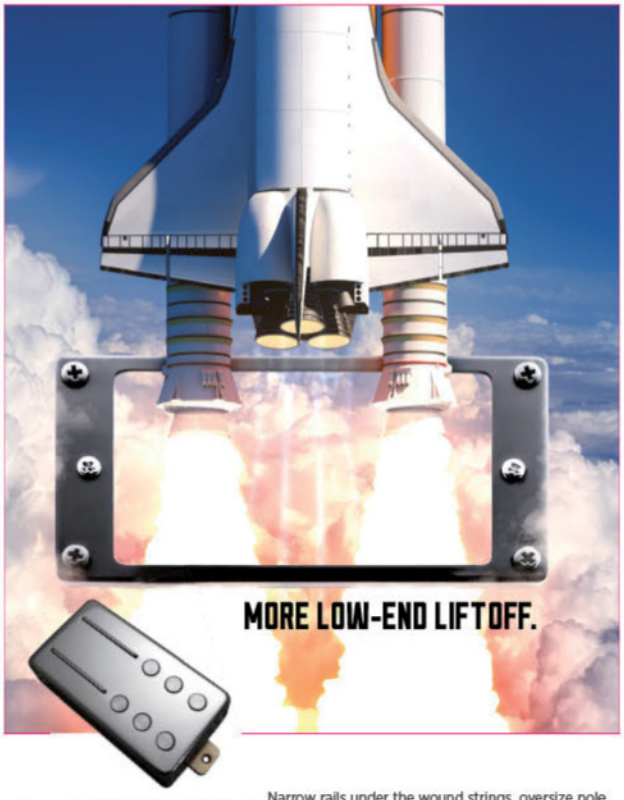

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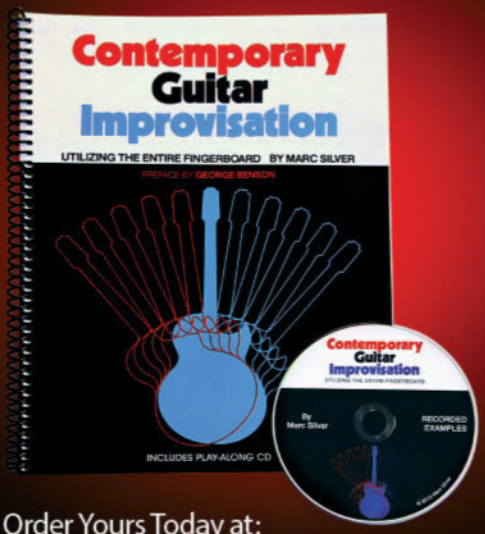

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BY CHRIS GILL

1984-85 MESA/BOOGIE MARK IIC+

CATEGORY: AMPLIFIER

[*above*] Toto's Steve Lukather performs in Los Angeles in the Eighties, right around the time the Mesa/Boogie Mark IIC+ was a major player in his studio setup; [*above right*] three vintage Mesa/Boogie Mark IIC+ combos

LUKATHER: LESTER COHEN/GETTY IMAGES AMPS: COURTESY OF MESA/BOOGIE

THE MESA/BOOGIE MARK II model introduced in late 1978 represented a major milestone in the evolution of modern guitar amplifier design with its channel switching and cascaded high-gain preamp. However, the amp wasn't quite perfect, and over the years Mesa/Boogie performed numerous upgrades based on input from guitarists that led to the Mark IIB, Mark IIC and the final version, the Mark IIC+. Because the new Mark III model was already well in development by the time the Mark IIC+ was introduced in January 1984, the IIC+ was short-lived, produced for only 14 months until March 1985.

Typical of Mesa/Boogie Mark Series amps, the IIC+ was offered with a dizzying assortment of options. The base models were 60-watt heads or combos, but buyers could upgrade to 100 watts and add a graphic EQ, reverb, SimulClass and other options. Mesa also offered the 300-watt Coliseum model designed for bands that typically played arenas and stadiums. Mesa built fewer than 3,000 Mark IIC+ amps, including 56 Coliseum models, but many Mark IIC and even a few Mark IIB amps were upgraded to C+ specs. And then there is the infamous Mark IIC++ version, featuring a custom factory upgrade that provided additional gain.

The Mark IIC+ is beloved for its dazzling dynamic clean tones, smooth singing compressed high-gain solo voices and its gut-punching maximum gain metal rhythm tones. Most of the amp's "holy grail" status is due to its use on Metallica's *Master of Puppets*, although James Hetfield and Kirk Hammett had IIC++ models and employed Aphex EQF-2 semi-parametric EQs and Aphex CX-1 Compressor/Gates in the effects loop for tone-shaping "secret sauce." The IIC+ was also a mid-Eighties favorite of first-call L.A. session players like Mike Landau, Steve Lukather and Dean Parks, and it was Prince's amp of choice for his 1984 *Purple Rain* tour and beyond. The IIC+ has remained a mainstay of John Petrucci's rig with Dream Theater as well, which Mesa recently honored by issuing its very first artist signature amp, the JP-2C Mark IIC+ model.

Thanks to its appearance on numerous legendary recordings and its limited production, the original Mark IIC+ remains the most coveted and valuable Mesa/Boogie amp ever made. Prices have soared in recent years — Reverb.com listings range from $5,000 for a basic 60-watt combo to $15,000 and up. Lukather's Mark IIC+ Coliseum recently sold for $20,000. The Mark IIC+'s predecessor the Mark IIB and its immediate successor the Mark III (black stripe version) offer similar tones, but their prices have also increased significantly.

SUGGESTED SETTINGS

JAMES HETFIELD RHYTHM

Volume 1: 9,
Treble: 7,
Bass: 1.75,
Middle: 4,
Master 1: 4.5,
Lead Drive: 6,
Lead Master: 3,
Presence: 2,
Graphic EQ: In,
Full Power, (Graphic EQ) 80Hz: +4dB, 240Hz: -2dB, 750Hz: -8dB, 2200Hz: -2dB, 6600Hz: +4

STEVE LUKATHER SOLO

Volume 1: 5,
Treble: 6,
Bass: 1,
Middle: 7,
Master 1: 3,
Lead Drive: 5,
Lead Master: 4,
Presence: 3,
Graphic EQ: In, ½ Power, (Graphic EQ) 80Hz: -4dB, 240Hz: +2dB, 750Hz: +8dB, 2200Hz: +4dB, 6600Hz: 0dB

The JP-2C Mark IIC+ offers genuine IIC+ tones plus a plethora of modern upgrades, including three truly independent channels, that make it a satisfying alternative. Mesa's Mark V series amps from the Mark V Medium Head to the Mark V:25 Head also offer Mark IIC+ modes that sound very close to the original.

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